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**Behavioral Polarization and Partisan Sorting:
How Identity Alignment Drives Polarized Politics**

A Dissertation Presented

by

Lilliana Mason

to

The Graduate School

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements

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in

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Abstract of the Dissertation

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Partisan sorting is capable of driving mass political behavior. As work in social psychology demonstrates, social identities such as party, ideology, religion and race are powerful motivators of bias, activism and anger. Furthermore, when multiple social identities come into alignment, this alignment strengthens the effects of these identities on behavior, and strengthens the cognitive and motivational bases of ingroup bias and negative emotion by increasing the perceived differences between the groups, regardless of the true differences between them. Thus the effect of political identities and the alignment between them can occur independently of the extremity or importance of an individual's held issue positions. Therefore, even if, as argued by many political scientists, the American electorate remains a relatively moderate nation in terms of issue positions, it is still possible for the psychological effects of political sorting to affect important political behavior such as partisan bias, political activism and anger at political opponents. This theory is supported by data from the ANES and with data drawn from a nationally-representative sample collected by Polimetrix from a National Science Foundation grant.

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Dedication Page

Dedicated to Penny and Mabel, whose existence made this project better, and Dave, who made it possible.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

“The chief oppositions which occur in society are between individuals, sexes, ages, races, nationalities, sections, classes, political parties and religious sects. Several such may be in full swing at the same time, but the more numerous they are the less menacing is any one. *Every species of conflict interferes with every other species in society at the same time, save only when their lines of cleavage coincide; in which case they reinforce one another...* A society, therefore, which is riven by a dozen oppositions along lines running in every direction, may actually be in less danger of being torn with violence or falling to pieces than one split along just one line.” (Ross, 1920, pp. 152-153, italics in original)

It is becoming widely observed in popular culture that Americans are growing increasingly polarized along partisan lines. In a country in which members of the two parties must not only govern together but also live and work together, this increasing polarization has the potential to inhibit not only the functioning of government at the elite level, but also a common sense of citizenship at the public level. When partisan compromise is required but often unattainable in the highest levels of government, it is left to the citizenry to call for cooperative action, to demand that the most polarized elites step back from the rancorous partisan precipice. However, the number of Americans who are, instead, cheering on their polarized and entrenched representatives seems to be increasing, as the divide between average Democrats and Republicans in the electorate grows in a wide array of public spheres.

Early in 2012, TiVo Research and Analytics matched television viewing data with voter registration information from 186,000 American households (Carter, 2012). They sorted television programs by how popular they were with members of each party, listing the top 20 shows for Democratic and Republican viewers. Not a single network show appeared on both lists. According to TiVo, Democrats prefer animated comedies, while

Republicans enjoy reality shows, and they differ almost all the way down the list of other shows. Republicans and Democrats are not only divided on their televised entertainment, they seem to be drawing further apart culturally, politically, and even geographically. The partisan segregation of U.S. counties increased by 26 percent between 1980 and 2000 (Bishop, 2009). Partisans are less satisfied with their neighborhoods if they are told that outgroup partisans live there (Hui, 2013). Democrats and Republicans most often discuss politics with members of their own party, and tend to know and trust members of their own party more than members of the opposing party (Gelman, 2008). They are increasingly divided on ideological, religious and racial lines (Abramowitz, 2010; Layman, 2001; Giles and Hertz, 1994). The differences between Democrats and Republicans in recent years have been compounded by the alignment of a number of social cleavages that fall on the same fault line as the partisan divide.

The sorting of Americans along partisan lines has been widely noticed and often discussed among political scientists. However, the social and psychological results of this sorting on average Americans has not been as thoroughly examined. In 1981, Robert Dahl praised the stability of the American political system, suggesting that the health of the American system of democracy was due to an unaligned set of social cleavages. At the time, divisions between Americans over party, religion, class, race and geography did not align neatly with each other, so that particular social groups were friends in some circumstances and opponents in others. This allowed individuals to have a greater understanding of and sympathy for their opponents in any given conflict.

However, he warned that,

“If all the cleavages occur along the same lines, if the same people hold opposing positions in one dispute after another, then the severity of conflicts is likely to increase. The person on the other side is not just an opponent; he or she soon becomes an enemy.”
(Dahl, 1981, p. 279)

This transformation of partisans from opponents to enemies is a trend that has been anecdotally examined on news programs and in political punditry, and increasingly in political science. The American political atmosphere has become noticeably rancorous, angry and harsh. Partisans of both parties are less interested in compromise, preferring their parties to stand firm on their own positions rather than work with the opposing side (Wolf, Strachan and Shea, 2012). Part of the reason for this increasing vitriol is, in fact, that American social cleavages are moving into alignment, with political parties acting as the focal point. This new party-centric arrangement of social identities is having social and psychological effects on American partisans, causing them to view their opponents as increasingly foreign, untrustworthy and incomprehensible. The alignment of social cleavages strengthens partisan ties, leading to growing levels of partisan bias, political activism and anger in the electorate.

Unfortunately, political science research has been slow to make the connection between partisan sorting and the emotional and behavioral political outcomes of that sorting. Part of this is due to the fact that the political literature that most closely examined these issues - the cross-pressures literature - is relatively stale, methodologically questionable and has not been revisited in quite some time (with the exception of Mutz, 2002a, 2002b). Another reason is that political scientists who examine polarization are in disagreement over whether polarization is occurring at all in

the electorate. Evidence of increasing partisanship and activism is held up against evidence that most Americans hold relatively moderate issue positions and therefore agree with each other (for example, Abramowitz, 2010 vs Fiorina et al, 2005, see Chapter 2 for a deeper discussion). In fact, the phenomenon of partisan sorting is being used as a weapon in this debate, with sorting being suggested as an alternative explanation for polarization (Fiorina et al, 2005), rather than as a potential source of increasingly polarized political behavior.

Scholars in other fields, however, have been involved in research that lends insight into the behavioral effects of the alignment of social cleavages. If a social cleavage is understood as a social identity, a wide field of research opens up that can be of great use in examining this phenomenon. Social identity theory originated in the 1970s and 1980s out of work by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, among others. It looks at the effects of social group membership on intergroup behavior. They have found that a positively biased assessment of the ingroup is a natural outgrowth of group membership, and that under conditions of competition or threat group members often engage in hostility toward outgroups. Simply being part of a social group creates bias in favor of the ingroup over an outgroup (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Thus, in a sense, as soon as an identity is assumed, a cleavage is created. Furthermore, as they state, “the more intense is an intergroup conflict, the more likely it is that individuals who are members of the opposing groups will behave toward each other as a function of their respective group memberships, rather than in terms of their individual characteristics or interindividual relationships” (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Thus, as conflict increases, the cleavages between groups become more salient.

Later research in social psychology used the concept of social identity and began to investigate the effects of holding numerous social identities, as all people do. At any given point, an individual can identify as a woman, a Christian, a college student, a mother, a southerner, a Mets fan, a Democrat, a liberal, a Latina, or any other combination of identities. In 2002, Sonia Roccas and Marilyn Brewer attempted to discover how multiple social identities interacted with each other, and whether the alignment of these identities might influence social behavior. This research never specifically looked at partisan identities, but did examine the effects of the alignment of racial, religious and national identities. They measured the extent to which different social groups were perceived to share characteristics and members. As they demonstrate,

The groups Catholic and Italian could serve as an example. Although these two groups do not objectively share all of their members (many Italians are not Catholic, and many Catholics are not Italian), some people may perceive them as highly overlapping: When they think about Italians they think about Catholics, and persons of different religious faith are not considered “real” Italians. (Roccas and Brewer, 2002, pp. 94-95)

They discovered that individuals who are members of highly overlapping groups (those that are similar in characteristics and include many of the same people) are more intolerant of outgroups and more reactive to threats than members of groups that are not seen as overlapping. Thus, an Italian Catholic will be more intolerant of non-Italians than an Italian Jew would be.

According to these results, as partisan cleavages move into alignment with ideological, religious and racial cleavages, partisans are likely to become increasingly intolerant of each other and increasingly sensitive to party threats. It should be expected that a conservative, Evangelical Republican will be more intolerant of Democrats than a

liberal, secular Republican would be. Similarly, a liberal, secular Democrat will be more intolerant of a Republican than a conservative, Evangelical Democrat would be. Part of the reason for this is that a set of highly aligned identities increases an individual's psychological motivation to discriminate against the outgroup, in order to create a positive self-definition. The more aligned the identities, the more important it is to a group member that the ingroup is the winner, because the failure of one group would mean the failure of multiple groups. It's as if a person's favorite baseball, football and basketball teams all won or lost based on the outcome of the baseball season. Another reason for increased intolerance is that when a number of social identities are lined up with partisanship, partisans have less opportunity to be exposed to the political viewpoints of the other side. Studies have shown that when people are exposed to cross-cutting political messages they grow more tolerant of opposing partisans (Mutz, 2002a). When they are not exposed to messages they disagree with, it is easy for them to remain intolerant. Thus, just as Dahl predicted in 1981, when all of the social cleavages line up, relations between groups become inflamed.

If this alignment of partisan and other identities is, in fact, driving a more rancorous political climate, it may help to explain why the evidence for issue polarization in the American electorate is less academically-settled than evidence of partisan incivility. Partisan incivility is a behavioral response to a changing alignment of identities, driven by psychological motivations to protect and defend an increasingly isolated partisan group. A disagreement on political issues is not the driving force behind

this behavioral polarization¹. It is therefore possible for many partisans to hold moderate issue positions but still grow increasingly polarized in the way they think, feel and act toward their political opponents, simply because of their increasingly insular social groups. This is an important and consequential phenomenon, not just for voting behavior but also for the demands that citizens place on elected representatives. As citizens retreat into increasingly isolated camps, the voices for compromise and moderation in government grow quiet.

This project thus aims to examine three related questions on the topic of partisan sorting and polarization. First, are issue polarization and behavioral polarization different phenomena? Can they be separated, and driven by different forces? Second, *can* partisan sorting increase behavioral polarization when issue polarization is unchanged? Third, *does* partisan sorting affect behavioral polarization more strongly than it affects issue polarization? In order to analyze these relationships, two different sets of survey data are used. First, the American National Election Study is examined because it can look at these questions over time, and with a large sample of Americans, although the available measures of key variables are imprecise. Second, a novel survey of Americans is administered to a national sample via Polimetrix in order to assess exactly these questions, using measures created expressly to measure the key variables as precisely as

¹ I refer here to *behavioral polarization* as a way to describe the increasing levels of partisan bias, political activism and anger in the electorate. Though this phenomenon does not necessarily conform to the classic definition of the term “polarization,” in which two groups become increasingly distant from each other on a single dimension, it is consistent with the conception of polarization as an increasingly sharp contrast between two groups. The term polarization, when applied to issues, suggests increasing extremity, or polarity, at either end of the issue spectrum. However, when the term is applied to groups, it can refer to the depth of the division between the two groups. Behavioral polarization refers to this division between the parties as groups of people, and the behavior that is the outcome of their increasing distinctiveness.

possible, but only at one point in time, in November 2011. The data, results and the relevant literature and methodological approach are examined in seven chapters.

Chapters 2 and 3 provide an overview of the literature that forms the basis for the current state of the debate over polarization and an alternate literature from social psychology that informs the theories presented here concerning the behavioral effects of the alignment of social groups along partisan lines. Chapter 4 explains the data and methods used in the examination of these theories, including operationalizations of the relevant variables. Chapter 5 examines the first of the three questions laid out above. The cumulative ANES data file is used to establish that issue positions and political behavior are separable, and that they do not move together through time. Chapters 6 and 7 examine the second of the three questions laid out above, assessing whether partisan sorting can increase behavioral polarization while issue positions are constrained to remain constant. In Chapter 6, this question is examined using ANES data, which requires the measure of partisan sorting to be limited only to partisan-ideological sorting. In Chapter 7, the Polimetrix data is used to provide a superior set of measures and to allow the examination of the sorting of multiple party-linked identities. Finally, in Chapter 8, issue positions are allowed to vary, and the relative effects of sorting on issue and behavioral polarization are assessed. An overview of the results, limitations of the analyses and directions for future research are discussed in the concluding chapter.

Chapter 2 – The Polarization Debate

Political scientists, for all their attempts to explain polarization, have been unable to come to a clear consensus on what drives polarization, or even whether it exists. This debate, incomprehensible to many observers of the partisan rancor on near constant display, boils down to two major disagreements: who is polarized and what polarization is. The first disagreement deals with *who* it is that is polarized. On one side of the debate, generally espoused by Morris Fiorina and his colleagues, the argument is made that polarization is only really occurring among our elected representatives and other elite party leaders (Fiorina, Abrams & Pope, 2005; 2008; Fiorina and Abrams, 2008; Fiorina and Levendusky, 2006). These representatives and leaders, due to a number of influences including an increasingly polarizing primary process, a fiercely competitive search for campaign funds, a conflict-hungry media, and the necessity of pandering to donors and activists, have been either forced to take increasingly extreme positions in governing or have lost their seats to those who are willing to take extreme positions and eschew compromise in government. According to the Fiorina side of the argument, most of the electorate is out of sync with this elite polarization, and the average American still holds moderate issue positions. The average, moderate, compromise-minded citizen is thus left with a set of terrible options to choose from. They can choose to vote for their own increasingly extreme party candidate with whom they don't entirely agree, or they can vote for the candidates of the other party, who are also increasingly extreme, but in the opposite direction. Most voters in this case are expected to hold their noses and vote consistently for their own party, all the while wishing their representatives would moderate their positions somewhat, in order to fall into agreement with the general

moderation of the mass public. According to Fiorina, most Americans would prefer divided control over government, where no single party controls the House, Senate and Presidency, suggesting that the American electorate is not stridently partisan, pushing for eternal one-party victory (Fiorina, Abrams & Pope, 2005; 2008). However, from the perspective of electoral outcomes, the illusion is created that the public is polarizing, as they are consistently choosing candidates of their own party, and their true opinion moderation and resulting discomfort with this choice falls by the wayside in political descriptions of partisan voting (Fiorina, Abrams & Pope, 2005; 2008; Fiorina and Abrams, 2008; Fiorina and Levendusky, 2006; Levendusky, 2009; Wolfe, 1998).

In this sense, the electorate is not truly divided, it is simply cursed with highly divided and divisive leaders. All of the talk about polarization discussed by the television pundits can only truly be applied to these leaders, and is deeply misleading as it regards the American electorate. In the Fiorina view, the electorate as a whole is seen to hold generally moderate positions on most issues. Democrats and Republicans have been found to significantly overlap on many issue positions, even the most contentious ones - Garner and Palmer (2011) found 58 percent overlap between Democrats and Republicans on the abortion issue scale. When examined at the aggregate level, a large amount of overlap between the issue positions of red- and blue-state citizens has been found as well (Levendusky and Pope, 2011). This is often considered to be an indication of a deep well of agreement that would reign over our politics if only our leaders could be made to be less extreme.

Crucially, the general moderation of issue positions is, in this view, understood to be an essential quality of American politics, with issue opinions being the key element of

politics that have real consequences and concrete outcomes. Fiorina argues that much of the increased partisan voting and an increasing correlation between party and ideology that has been seen in recent years is not an indication of polarization, but instead a symptom of partisan-ideological sorting. As the parties have sorted into the “correct” combination of party and ideology, partisan voting and partisan cues become easier to follow, and thus lead to increased partisan identification. This, however, according to Fiorina, does not matter in the study of polarization, which Fiorina and Levendusky (2006) define as a “bimodal distribution of opinion” (p.54). Sorting is seen as a shuffling of affiliations, with little effect on issue positions. Non-issue-related political outcomes and behaviors are generally not examined in this side of the debate (see Levendusky (2009) for an exception). As long as American voters generally agree on issues, as long as red state citizens are only slightly more conservative on average than blue state citizens on a host of issues, the Fiorina argument suggests that there is very little to worry about in terms of a deepening rift between red and blue America. After all, we all basically agree about what to do, we just can’t find representatives who are as moderate and cooperative as we want them to be. It is not a *good* political situation, but it also does not reflect a deepening rift in the core of the country, which would be much more dangerous for American democracy. So on the question of *who* is polarizing, the Fiorina side of the debate falls squarely on pointing at the elected officials. And on the question of *what* polarization is, this side of the debate argues that polarization is a measure of how extremely the electorate feels about issues.

Against the Fiorina side of the debate, a number of political scientists have lined up to argue that things are in fact much worse than Fiorina and his colleagues make them

seem. First, assuming for the moment that polarization is, in fact, a measure of issue position extremity, many arguments have been made to explain that Americans are, in fact, growing steadily and increasingly polarized on issue positions, particularly when the electorate is not overly-aggregated, including the uninterested along with the politically interested (Abramowitz, 2012; Abramowitz and Saunders, 2008; Jacobson, 2012; Garner and Palmer, 2011). Thus the question of *who* is polarizing, on this side of the argument, is answered by pointing at a large and growing portion of the electorate – engaged partisans. According to Abramowitz (2010), when analyses examine the most engaged voters - those who arguably have the largest effect on national politics, and whose number is steadily increasing (see also Iyengar et al, 2012), issue polarization is strong and increasing. Abramowitz and Saunders (2008) find large opinion differences between Democrats and Republicans in a large segment of the public, and most deeply among the most interested citizens. Furthermore, they find large differences in issue positions between red and blue states that were won by more than 5 points by either side, which includes 38 of 50 states. The very moderate middle does exist, but it is by and large uninvolved and uninterested in politics, involving a minority of states, and thus less relevant to political outcomes.

This argument suggests that by aggregating all involved and uninvolved voters, the Fiorina analysis obscures an increasing polarization that is occurring among the voters that are the most relevant to shaping national politics, a group that is growing in size – political partisans. Jacobson (2012) finds similar results, suggesting that the issue positions of self-identified Democratic and Republican voters (as opposed to non-voters) show a bimodal distribution of responses, with nearly no overlap at all between their

positions on any issue. Furthermore, while Garner and Palmer (2011) found a substantial amount of overlap between average Democrats and Republicans on most issues (while including the unengaged middle), they also found that the general trend in the mass electorate is toward increasing issue polarization. While perhaps modest now, the momentum, even when including the least engaged citizens, is in the direction of Democrats and Republicans pulling further apart in their issue positions.

A second criticism of the Fiorina approach comes from the question of *what* polarization is. Even if Fiorina is correct and the nation as a whole holds moderate issue positions, is this enough to say that average citizens are not polarized? There are behavioral and emotional elements of the political environment that can certainly be an indication of partisan rancor and discord, even without the inclusion of issue position polarization. An increasing amount of research in this vein has, in fact, uncovered a trend in the average American citizenry that suggests that whatever their issue positions are, Americans are behaving in very partisan ways. First, the Fiorina model would predict that Americans should be increasingly unhappy with the lack of moderation and compromise coming from their own parties if the voters themselves are truly moderate. Campbell (2006) argues that if Americans are increasingly disconnected from the polarization of their leaders, we should expect them to show decreased partisan affiliation, decreased turnout and an increase in ticket-splitting, or voting for different parties on the same ballot. In fact, what Campbell finds is the opposite: an increase in strong party identifiers, an increase in turnout, and a decrease in ticket splitting. Abramowitz and Saunders (2008) also find that as voters perceive larger differences between the two parties, they become more engaged. Importantly, Jacobson (2012) finds

that partisans do not view their own candidates or party as more extreme than they are. They do, however, view the opposing party as more extreme than that party's members judge it to be. Not only this, but Wolf, Strachan and Shea (2012) have found evidence that substantial and increasing portions of Americans actively want their party leaders to stand firm on their principles and eschew compromise with the other side, blaming all governmental incivility on the opposing party. This does not sound like an electorate that wishes its party would be more moderate.

Going beyond the attitudes of citizens toward their party leaders, more evidence is appearing that Americans are increasingly distrustful and prejudiced against members of the opposing party even on a personal level. Hui (2013) has found that partisans prefer to live in neighborhoods with co-partisans. After an experimental manipulation informing residents that more out-group partisans live in the neighborhood than previously thought, resident satisfaction with their neighborhoods decreased. Iyenger, Sood and Lelkes (2012) find that Democrats and Republicans increasingly dislike each other on a personal level, to an extent approximating hatred. Importantly, they find these effects not only in engaged partisans, but also in non-activists. According to their results, half of Republicans and one third of Democrats would feel unhappy if their son or daughter chose to marry a member of the opposing party. This echoes results found by Kloffstad, McDermott and Hatemi (2012) finding that users of dating websites prefer to date those people who are politically similar to them. Members of both parties negatively stereotype members of the opposing party, and the extent of this partisan stereotyping has increased by fifty percent between 1960 and 2010 (Iyengar et al, 2012). This personal dislike and prejudice, Iyengar et al suggest, is only inconsistently founded in policy

attitudes, leading them to advocate for a separate measure of polarization, one that is based in the concept of social distance, or group-level animosity, rather than issue position extremity.

Others have examined non-issue phenomena to look at the increasing levels of polarization in the electorate. Jacobson (2004) uses measures of partisan identity, party candidate loyalty, and split tickets to identify polarization. Bartels (2002) examines partisan bias in evaluations of political events and Bartels (2000) looks at the increasing impact of partisanship on voting. In fact, Jacobson (2006) suggests that the partisan-ideological sorting, unconnected from issue positions, that Fiorina excludes from the definition of polarization may be capable of strengthening partisan sentiments, causing “widespread susceptibility of ordinary voters to partisan and ideological appeals” (p.90). It is within reason that these newly susceptible voters may, independent of the issue positions they hold, begin behaving in ways that demonstrate high levels of partisan animosity. Thus, these behavioral aspects of polarization are gaining traction as an alternate measure of polarization, in contrast to the purely issue-based definition preferred by the Fiorina camp.

The dispute between the Fiorina camp and its opponents has obscured an important phenomenon occurring in American politics. In fact, as I explain below, it is possible for both camps to be somewhat correct, and this middle ground has been relatively unexplored. If issue polarization and behavioral polarization can be considered separately, and can move independently of each other, some of the confusion over the current debate can be cleared up. This project offers a new understanding of polarization as characterized by *uncivil agreement*, in which many Americans may tend to agree on

many issues, but are nevertheless growing increasingly biased, active and angry. In the terms of the current debate, then, this work moves beyond previous theory in two important ways – definition and theory. Before the polarization dispute can be addressed, the terms of the debate must be clarified. The difference between issue position polarization and the behavioral and social polarization that Iyengar et al advocate must be explicitly examined, and the two types of polarization should not be confused. This chapter examines the current confusion over the definition of political polarization, and offers a clarified set of terms. In the following chapter, the theoretical basis behind increasing behavioral polarization is examined and a new motivational mechanism is suggested that can explain the emergence of the current state of uncivil agreement.

Defining Polarization

The *who* and the *what* elements of the current polarization debate, while often discussed, are not often clearly delineated. Much of the back and forth around this debate has been based in basic disagreements over sample selection, variable coding and descriptive statistics. What has been missing is a clear elaboration that the Fiorina camp considers issue polarization to be the central measure of mass polarization, and that they believe that the entire electorate, even the unengaged, to be fair game in assessing the existence of polarization in the public. The Abramowitz camp, on the other hand, agrees that issue positions are a central measure of mass polarization, but believes that there is compelling evidence of widespread polarization in the mass public when the analyses focus on partisans - those citizens most interested and engaged in politics, a growing and influential population. Finally, a third camp which includes Jacobson and Iyengar argue that issue polarization should not be the singular determination of whether the mass

electorate, taken as a whole, is politically polarized. Social and group dynamics between partisans can become markedly inflamed, and this type of polarization bears analyzing on its own merits.

This project focuses on the *what* end of the polarization debate, generally considering the entire electorate, including the unengaged, to be fair game for this study. However, it makes a clear distinction between issue position polarization and behavioral polarization. *Issue position polarization* is characterized by an increase in the extremity of issue positions in the mass public. In a population undergoing issue position polarization, people will move from moderate positions on issues to more extreme positions, stating that they are more strongly committed to their chosen positions and allowing for less uncertainty in their responses. On a standard survey-response to an issue prompt ranging from “strongly support” to “strongly oppose”, an issue-polarized public will move en masse toward the extremes of the response options, and away from the more moderate responses in the middle of the scale.

Behavioral polarization is characterized by increasing partisan strength, partisan bias, activism and anger, all intergroup dynamics between the two parties. In a population undergoing behavioral polarization, citizens will report stronger affiliations with their chosen political party. These citizens will therefore exhibit bias in evaluating the relative merits of the two parties, viewing their own party’s actions as more positive and praiseworthy than the opponent party’s actions, even when the two parties are behaving in similar ways. They will become more active in politics, in order to defend the status of their chosen party. Finally, citizens who have undergone behavioral polarization will feel and express more anger at members and officials of the opposing

party, by means of public protest, communication with political representatives, and personal and online discourse.

These two types of polarization are separable and distinct. A population that is partisan, biased, active and angry does not necessarily hold extreme issue positions. This is because political behavior such as bias, activism and anger can be linked directly to partisanship, or to any political identity. This relationship is developed further in Chapter 3, but for the purposes of defining polarization it is sufficient to suggest that the partisanship that drives polarized behavior does not necessarily move in lock step with extremity of issue positions. As Iyengar et al (2012) have found, interparty animosity is not reliably linked with political attitudes.

Issue Positions and Political Identity

This theory decouples issue positions and partisanship in a way that is potentially counter-intuitive. We generally assume that individuals choose the political party that best fits their own interests and issue positions, and thus that issue positions and party affiliation are strongly linked (Abramowitz and Saunders, 1998; Bafumi and Shapiro, 2009; Dancy and Goren, 2010; Fiorina, 1981; Luskin, McIver and Carmines, 1989). It is true that issue position orientation and partisan orientation are strongly linked (i.e., those with liberal-leaning issue positions are very likely to be Democrats), but it is not always true that the stronger one's partisanship, the more extreme one's issue positions.

The strength of a person's partisanship can derive from a number of non-issue influences. Prior research has found that being a member of a social group that usually identifies with your political party can increase the strength of partisanship (Cambell et al, 1960). Certain personality traits such as extraversion, agreeableness and openness can

increase the strength of party identification (Gerber et al, 2012). Personal experience with politics and habituation to political involvement can increase the strength of partisan identity (Jennings and Markus, 1984). Even a sense of uncertainty communicated by a political leader can temporarily increase partisanship (Hohman et al, 2010). Any of these influences can increase the strength of partisanship without also increasing the extremity of issue positions. They are largely associational or psychological influences on partisan identification that cause an individual to feel more strongly identified with the party because the party makes up a larger or more familiar part of that individual's social world, or because they are otherwise psychologically inclined to cling more strongly to a political party. These influences, however, do not necessarily make a person more certain of the issue positions they hold, or increase the extremity of those issue positions.

Furthermore, and even more counter-intuitive than decoupling issues and partisanship, issue positions can be decoupled from ideological identity. Ideological identity, like partisan identity, can be understood to be a group identity that is not necessarily pegged to an equivalent set of issue positions. Malka and Lelkes (2010) have looked at the differences between ideological identity and a person's set of issue positions, and have found that the identity-ideology relationship is by no means static. It is governed by social influence and the information environment, and therefore the strength of the relationship between issues and ideology can change from day to day. Because issues and ideology can move separately, they can be understood as separate phenomena. In fact, Ellis and Stimson (2012) have argued that Americans' "operational" ideology, or their actual issue positions, is a divergent concept from their "symbolic" ideology, or how they identify themselves. This means that ideological identity-driven

behavior may move differently than the extremity of held issue positions. The strength of an ideological identity does not necessarily correspond to extreme opinions.

Splitting issues from party or issues from ideology this way may seem like an unnatural approach in the study of politics. It is normatively preferable for parties, ideologies and specific issue positions to line up nicely, according to the direction, importance, and extremity of the issues themselves. We should, after all, become involved in politics for the instrumental purpose of having some influence over the decisions made by our government. However, we do also associate with parties and even ideological labels as group members. Group dynamics (discussed in Chapter 3) can motivate people to participate in behavior and to feel emotions that are distinctly group-derived, and not necessarily backed up by good reasons. When viewed this way, it becomes possible for both sides of the polarization debate to be correct. If partisan or ideological identity is moved by a non-issue-based force, the identities can affect behavior far more powerfully than they affect issue positions. It is thus possible for issue position polarization to remain low while behavioral polarization increases.

The Importance of Behavioral Polarization

The polarization of political behavior has only recently and scarcely been delineated as a unique phenomenon in the study of political polarization (see, Iyengar et al, 2012). Though this is not to say that it has not often been demonstrated to exist. The behavior of the American electorate has been shown to be increasingly biased, active and angry. Work by Iyengar et al, (2012), Levendusky (2009), Bartels (2002) and Mason (2013) have shown that partisans are increasingly biased in their relative assessments of the two parties. Partisans feel more warmly toward their own party, they prefer to spend

social time with members of their party, they are becoming less capable of thinking of anything they like about the opposing party, and they hold negative stereotypes about the opposing party. Abramowitz (2010) finds numerous examples of increasing levels of partisan activism and political involvement: more voters now are interested in elections, follow politics, care which party wins the presidency and control of Congress, and are politically knowledgeable and politically active than they were in the 1980s. And finally, the number of voters who report feeling angry at the outgroup presidential candidate has increased by 20 percent since the 1980s (Mason, 2013). The electorate is growing increasingly biased, active and angry.

At the same time, however, according to the Fiorina criteria, issue positions in the mass public have not polarized significantly, and this is seen by the Fiorina camp as cause to dismiss the entire existence of mass polarization (Fiorina, Abrams & Pope, 2005; 2008; Fiorina and Abrams, 2008; Fiorina and Levendusky, 2006; Levendusky, 2009; Wolfe, 1998). The theory presented here, for the sake of simplicity, is generally willing to cede the ground that issue positions in the electorate as a whole may not be deeply polarized, but this lack of issue polarization cannot be used to dismiss the existence of any kind of polarization at all occurring in the electorate. Issue polarization and behavioral polarization must be considered separately. Polarization can thus be demonstrated to be occurring in mass political behavior *despite* a general agreement and moderation in issue positions. This is a crucial distinction and one that will be examined repeatedly in the coming pages. An electorate that increasingly treats its political opponents as enemies, with ever-growing levels of prejudice, offensive action and anger, is a clear sign of political polarization occurring within the citizenry. If issue positions do

not follow precisely this pattern of behavioral polarization, it does not make those increasingly tribal partisan interactions disappear.

Americans can agree on many issues, and can hold relatively moderate positions on most issue scales, but this does not prove that we all generally get along. In the recent 2013 debate over expanding background checks for gun purchases, 81 percent of Republicans personally supported a law expanding background checks, but only 57 percent of them supported the Senate passing the amendment, an action that would have been a victory for Democrats (Pew, 2013a). On this issue, Republicans and Democrats in the electorate clearly and massively agreed on what they wanted as the outcome. There was no polarization on this issue. However, when it came to the moment of public partisan competition, loyalty to the team trumped issue positions for many Republicans. Similarly, 87 percent of Americans support government development of solar and wind power, 87 percent say abortion should be permitted if the mother's life is in danger, and 80 percent support stricter border control to control immigration (Clement, 2013). And yet the environment, abortion and immigration are recurring themes in electoral competitions, drumbeats for "motivating" political action. But why would Americans be so driven to participate in elections if they all generally agree on the issue outcomes? Part of the answer is that the mass public is polarized not only by issue opinions but also by their increasingly strong political group identities. Their behavior taken to defend the party's status does not match their moderate issue reputations. It is therefore important to keep behavioral polarization and issue polarization quite separate in the discussion of American mass polarization. The two types of polarization are not only distinct

phenomena, but they are influenced by different forces and lead to different conclusions about the divisiveness of the American electorate.

When polarization is understood as a largely *behavioral* phenomenon, it becomes possible to identify political group-based influences that drive increases in specific types of political behavior. These influences are discussed at length in Chapter 3, and all rest on known psychological and social effects of group-based behavior. However, while group identities reliably predict group-related behavior, issue positions have been shown to be highly unpredictable. Converse's landmark 1964 study found that American issue positions are largely inconsistent across issue areas and highly changeable even within the same person at different points in time. Malka and Lelkes (2010) find that even today issue attitudes are only unreliably attached to ideological labels and can be moved around by social influence. Cohen (2003) found issue positions to be highly dependent on group and party cues- liberals expressed support for a harsh welfare program and conservatives expressed support for a lavish welfare program when they were told that their in-group party supported the policy. Notably, these respondents did not believe that their position had been influenced by their party affiliation. This result in particular lends some doubt to the general perception expressed among partisans and pundits that levels of political bias, action, and anger are drawn entirely from the conviction of their issue opinions.

According to a Washington Post/Harvard poll of Massachusetts 2010 special election voters, 51 percent of respondents who voted for the Republican senate candidate Scott Brown supported the universal health care law in Massachusetts established by Republican governor Mitt Romney (Washington Post-Kaiser-Harvard Massachusetts special election poll, 2010). However, when asked about the very similar market-based

health care reform proposed by the Democratic Obama administration and Democratic Congress, only 13 percent of the *same* respondents supported it. One person's opinion of the same policy was radically different depending on which party endorsed it. Similarly, a Pew poll from June 2013 found that under Republican President George W. Bush, 38 percent more Republicans than Democrats believed that NSA surveillance programs were acceptable, while under Democratic President Barack Obama, Republicans were 12 percent less supportive of NSA surveillance than Democrats (Pew, 2013b). The question prompt was identical, the only difference was the party of the president. As in the Cohen (2003) experiment, it is likely that these voters, if asked, would have provided logical reasons for their change of heart. However, as Cohen experimentally demonstrated, the influence of party loyalty is capable of entirely reversing a single person's well-argued issue position, without them even realizing it. Goren (2005) finds that partisan identities are more stable than issue opinions on matters of equal opportunity, limited government, traditional family values, and moral tolerance and are capable of changing opinions on equal opportunity, limited government and moral tolerance, while these political attitudes do not change partisan identification. Even in the realm of objective facts rather than opinion, Enns and McAvoy (2012) have found that the perceptions of objective economic conditions are deeply vulnerable to partisan bias, while Bartels (2002) finds that partisanship significantly changes voters' assessments of economic conditions and presidential performance. Partisanship is capable of corrupting citizens' understanding of the objective condition of the state of the economy, as well as their own stated opinions.

In light of these results, evidence of the moderation of issue positions in the electorate becomes a less convincing metric of mass political polarization. Issue position

polarization is vulnerable to social influences, unpredictable and unreliable, and therefore insufficient as a measure of political passion and discord. Behavioral polarization, on the other hand, is a direct measure of the perceptual, behavioral and emotional rifts between average Americans. These rifts can be directly linked to intergroup dynamics resulting from strong partisan and other political identities. Partisan identities, in comparison with issue opinions, are generally understood to be comparatively more stable – often referred to as the “unmoved mover” of American politics (Campbell et al, 1960; Johnston, 2006). It is therefore reasonable to expect that steady increases in behavioral polarization are driven by long-term changes in political identities, and not associated with changes in relatively unpredictable and unstable issue positions. The question then arises, what has changed about our political identities?

Sorting

Political scientists tend to agree that partisan-ideological sorting has occurred in the American electorate during recent decades (Abramowitz, 2010; Bafumi and Shapiro, 2009; Baldassarri and Gelman, 2008; Fiorina et al, 2005; Jacobson, 2007; Levendusky, 2009). Specifically, people have sorted into the “correct” combination of party and ideology – Democrats are now more liberal and Republicans are more conservative than they were 50 years ago. That this sorting has occurred is non-controversial, reams of evidence support it. The ideological orientations of Democratic and Republican members of Congress, once overlapping, are now separated by a space where moderates used to be (Theriault, 2008; Galston and Nivola, 2006; McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal, 2008). The ideological composition of Republicans and Democrats in Congress has steadily become more homogeneous since the 1970s (McCarty et al, 2008). The

correlation between partisanship and ideology in the electorate is increasing, with the strength of the relationship nearly quadrupling between 1972 and 2004 (Abramowitz, 2010; Fiorina and Levendusky, 2006). Straight-ticket voting has increased progressively since 1980 (Abramowitz, 2010; Hetherington, 2001). The number of people who see important differences between the parties has been rapidly increasing since the 1970's (Hetherington, 2001; Layman and Carsey, 2002) and an increasing number of people is capable of correctly placing the Democratic party to the ideological left of the Republican party (Hetherington, 2001; Levendusky, 2009). However, the meaning and results of sorting are less clear.

The Fiorina camp of the polarization debate tends to view this phenomenon as simply a reorganization of political tendencies, with little effect on behavior or partisan polarization (Fiorina et al, 2005; Levendusky, 2009). They argue that the “party sorting that has occurred over the past generation has moved the parties further apart from one another, but has not produced bimodal distributions of aggregate opinion,” suggesting that the electorate is simply shuffling around but maintaining relatively moderate issue positions and therefore not becoming truly polarized (Fiorina and Levendusky, 2006, p. 54). In fact, they argue that sorting is a better description of recent political changes than the term polarization.

The opponents of the Fiorina camp suggest that this sorting is a reflection of a deep polarization emerging in the electorate (Abramowitz and Saunders, 2008; Bafumi and Shapiro, 2009). They argue that sorting reflects a resurgence of partisanship rather than simply a reorganization of partisans (Bafumi and Shapiro, 2009; Hetherington, 2001). Jacobson (2006) pushes the point further, speculating that “sorting may have

strengthened partisan sentiments” (Jacobson, 2006, p. 90). I agree with this side of the debate, but insist that we must push beyond what sorting *reflects* toward a stronger look at what sorting *does* to our political behavior.

I argue that sorting itself has been responsible for increased levels of partisanship, and thus higher levels of polarized behavior including ingroup bias, activism and anger. This is due to the powerful effects of the political identities involved. The partisan-ideological sorting that has occurred during the last 50 years has not been a consequence-free realignment of static identities. Sorting has brought our ideological and partisan identities into agreement, and this new alignment has increased the strength of those identities. Furthermore, sorting has not been limited to political and ideological identities. Over the last few decades, we have seen other social identities come into alignment with partisanship as well: partisan identities have converged with religious (Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope, 2005; Green, Smidt, Guth & Kellstedt, 2005; Green, Kellstedt, Smidt & Guth, 2007; Jacobson, 2006; Layman, 1997; 2001; Woodberry and Smith, 1998), racial (Giles and Hertz, 1994; Mangum, 2013) and, in some cases, opinion-based group identities (Bliuc, McGarty, Reynolds and Muntele, 2007). As these identities come into alignment with partisanship, partisans cling more strongly to their parties and this affects political behavior.

It is possible to follow the roots of this theory all the way back to the seminal voting studies by Paul Lazarsfeld and his colleagues (Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, 1944) and Angus Campbell and his colleagues (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960) that introduced the idea of cross-pressures on voters. They suggested that partisans who identify with groups associated with the opposing party would be less likely to vote.

Lipset (1960) went so far as to call these cross-pressured voters “politically impotent,” suggesting that, “the more pressures brought to bear on individuals or groups which operate in opposing directions, the more likely are prospective voters to withdraw from the situation by ‘losing interest’ and not making a choice” (p.211). Further research found that these voters would be less strongly partisan (Powell, 1976) and that these “cross-cutting cleavages” would mitigate social conflict (Lipset, 1960; Nordlinger, 1972). This is because, as Miller (1983, p. 735) explains,

All societies are divided to some degree. But some societies, especially larger and more complex ones, are divided by a pluralism of cleavages that are often related to one another in a cross-cutting rather than reinforcing pattern. The superposition of this multiplicity of crosscutting partitions is a fine partition of society into a large number of relatively small preference clusters. Two random individuals, therefore, most likely belong to different preferences clusters and, if so, have conflicting preferences with respect to one or more issues but almost certainly agree on many issues as well.

This early research suggested that as long as the social divisions in society are cross-cutting, partisans of opposing parties would still be able to generally get along. However, once these cleavages begin to align along a single dimension, partisan conflict is expected to increase substantially. Unfortunately, these earlier studies suffered from methodological limitations, and have been difficult to replicate (Brader et al 2010; Mutz, 2002b).

More recent work has begun to suggest that, in fact, cross-pressures do reduce the strength of partisan affiliation and levels of political activism (Brader et al, 2010; Mutz, 2002b). The main limitation of the cross-pressures approach, however, is that these studies, while dancing around the concept of social identity, do not explicitly identify partisanship as a social identity. They therefore do not take advantage of the wealth of

research that can be used to make concrete predictions about the types of political behavior that are likely to come out of the most aligned, or least cross-pressured identities. The true power of sorting is its effect on political behavior via political and social identities. In the following chapter, the power and effect of partisan and ideological identities and the interaction between them will be examined from the perspective of social psychological theory and findings.

Chapter 3 – The Role of Identity

“Elections aren’t just about policy choices. They’re status competitions. When the polls swing your way, you feel a surge of righteous affirmation. Your views are obviously correct! Your team’s virtues are widely recognized! You get to see the humiliation and pain afflicting your foes.” - David Brooks, 2012

In 1960, Angus Campbell and his colleagues, in *The American Voter*, described partisan identification as a “psychological identification” and an “affective orientation.” (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960). Identifying with a party, they argued, is not simply the record of past voting or future vote choice. It is not a list of issue positions that a voter attempts to match to one party or the other. Instead, the psychological and emotional sense of belonging to a party has its own effect on political behavior – it is that sense of belonging that drives voting behavior, candidate assessments, evaluations of political events, and thus effectively “raises a perceptual screen through which the individual tends to see what is favorable to his partisan orientation” (p. 133). This “Michigan model” of partisanship was one of the first to discuss the real and apparent psychological effects of being part of a political group.

Over the years, the Michigan model of partisanship has fallen into and out of favor among political scientists. In its most ardent challenges, evidence of short-term fluctuations in party identification in the 1980s (MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson, 1989) and rational choice approaches to political decision-making in the 1970s (Fiorina, 1977) led political scientists away from the psychological effects of partisanship and toward a more instrumental view of party affiliation: one that views partisan identity as an endpoint - a reasoned decision based on an individual’s political opinions and rational

evaluations of the performance of political leaders. Fiorina (1981) described partisanship as a “running tally” of performance evaluations, a choice that is easily updated or changed when new information becomes available. Parties were seen not to exert much influence in the electorate on political opinions or behavior (Niemi and Weisberg, 1976) and identifying with a party was conceptualized as an outcome in itself, the result of reasoned political thought. This view held sway for a large portion of the 1970s and 1980s, incidentally during a time when partisan identity was, we now know, at the lowest level we have seen in the past 50 years (Bartels, 2000).

Since then however, a more social approach to partisan identity has seen a resurgence. Between the 1970s and the 2000s, partisan voting significantly and markedly increased, as did the number of strong partisan identifiers (Bartels, 2000). As the general strength of partisanship in the electorate increased, political scientists began to rediscover some of the behavioral and psychological effects of partisan identity originally discussed by the Michigan school. Bartels (2002) and Enns and McAvoy (2012) discovered strong perceptual biases among partisans in their evaluations of objective economic conditions and candidate evaluations. Rather than economic conditions determining partisanship, it appeared that partisanship was determining citizens’ understanding of economic conditions. Goren (2005) found partisan identities to affect a wide range of political values, and not the other way around. Green, Palmquist and Schickler (2002) likened partisan identity to religious identity, a social group membership that is acquired early in life and acts as an organizing force in an individual’s sense of identity and self, driving action and decision-making. They describe partisanship as a deep attachment to a social group, one that is not easily changed and robust to most criticisms and attacks. More

recently, other political scientists have begun advocating for a return to a more group-based approach to the study of partisanship (Greene, 1999; 2000;2004; Iyengar et al 2012; Mason, 2013; Mason, Huddy Aaroe, 2010).

Social groups, we have known for some time, affect the behavior of their members, and affect the relationships between those groups and outsiders. Political scientists have long discussed the effects of social group memberships such as religion, union membership, socioeconomic status and ethnicity on political behavior and participation (eg. Campbell et al, 1960; Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, 1944; Miller, Gurin, Gurin and Malanchuk, 1981). These types of identities are often considered “objective” group identities, ones to which members are assigned based on objective criteria. However, individuals can also associate with a group on a “subjective” basis, simply by feeling some psychological sense of attachment to the group. These subjective group identities have been found to elicit more loyalty from group members than objective group identities, and thus to have greater effects on individual behavior and intergroup dynamics (Conover, 1984; Huddy, 2001; 2003). Parties, according to this criterion, are subjective social groups, as membership in a party is almost entirely a psychological attachment to one party or another, and not one that is objectively visible. In fact, Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi and Ethier (1995) have found that political identity can be identified as a specific type of social identity, distinguishable from ethnic, vocational and personal identities. Party identities, therefore, should be expected to have their own effects on on individual psychology and behavior.

Effects of Social Identity

Social psychologists have elaborately examined the implications of feeling part of a social group, in a field of study generally known as social identity theory. Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1979) originally set out to better understand the social psychology of intergroup conflict, attempting to clarify the most basic effects of belonging to a group on intergroup relations. Tajfel and Turner (1979) describe a social identity as, “those aspects of an individual’s self-image that derive from the social categories to which he perceives himself as belonging” (p.40). From this definition, they elaborate three main principles of social identity theory: 1) individuals are motivated to maintain a positive social identity; 2) a positive social identity comes from positively distinguishing the ingroup from some outgroup; and 3) when a social identity is not sufficiently positive, individuals will either leave the group or work to make their original group better in relation to the outgroup. According to social identity theory, group members are powerfully motivated to see outgroups as different from them and to view the world through a competitive lens, with importance placed on the ingroup superiority, regardless of the content of the group identity.

Tajfel, Turner and their colleagues were curious to see exactly how basic these outcomes of social identities could be. A number of experiments were done that attempted to generate a “minimal group paradigm,” or an intergroup dynamic in which the groups were as close to meaningless as possible. In one of the earliest studies (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy and Flament, 1971), respondents were randomly assigned to two groups, and told that the groups represented individuals who, when presented with a screen full of dots, either over-estimated or under-estimated the number of dots. The respondents were

then asked to make decisions awarding money to other individuals in the study, identified only by their individual code number and their group affiliation (over- or under-estimators). There was no conflict of interest between the groups and no social interaction between the subjects. The subjects received no personal benefit from their decision either way. The outcome was significant ingroup favoritism and discrimination against the outgroup. This experiment was replicated with, instead of dots, preferences for painters. One group was told they preferred the paintings of Klee and the other group preferred Kandinsky. Again, the respondents demonstrated ingroup favoritism and outgroup discrimination. In fact, even when Billig and Tajfel (1973) told respondents that they were assigned to groups on a purely random basis, labeled group X and group W, and that only chance determined to which group they were assigned, the ingroup bias results persisted. Respondents engaged in ingroup favoritism over an outgroup that was totally free of any conceivable content. These respondents were not fighting for tangible self-interest, the money they allocated went to other people, not themselves. They simply felt psychologically motivated to privilege members of their own imaginary and ephemeral group. One more recent study even found effects of ingroup bias in a minimal group paradigm on an implicit, automatic level, measured as subconscious response latencies in classifying negative and positive words along with minimal group labels (Otten and Ventura, 1999). The ingroup bias that results from even minimal group membership is very deeply rooted in human psychological function and is perhaps impossible to escape. These minimal group experiments have been repeatedly replicated (see Brewer, 1979 for an early summary), leading Brewer (1979) to the conclusion that “any categorization rule that provides a basis for classifying an individual as belonging to one social grouping as

distinct from another can be sufficient to produce differentiation of attitudes toward the two groups, in the absence of any initial competitive interdependence” (p. 308). These studies have established that simply being part of a group causes ingroup favoritism, even without real objective competition between the groups over real resources. Even when there is nothing to fight over, group members want to win.

Obviously, competitions between Democrats and Republicans are not minimal group situations. The two parties compete for the power to implement very different party issue platforms, affecting the entire nation. Political victory provides power in government and increased freedom to enact real issue outcomes that often directly benefit the members of the winning party in the form of tax policies, welfare policies, business regulation or social programs. However, as Tajfel and Turner (1979) explain, “it is nearly impossible in most natural social situations to distinguish between discriminatory intergroup behavior based on real or perceived conflict of ‘objective’ interests between the groups and discrimination based on attempts to establish a positively-valued distinctiveness for one’s own group” (p. 46). In other words, though the parties are competing for real interests, they are also competing because it just feels good to win. Distinguishing between those motivations is not a simple matter, but it is sufficient to suggest that both motivations are separately present in any political competition.

Broader Effects of Identity on Behavior

Though the minimal group paradigm provides a fascinating baseline from which to understand group bias, work in social identity theory has gone far beyond this minimal case to examine how group identities such as partisanship affect behavior and emotion in more realistic group conflicts. Most importantly, the strength of a person’s attachment to

a group can vary, and the intensity of a group identity is capable of determining the extent to which the individual participates in the ingroup bias that is a natural outgrowth of group membership (Huddy, 2001). The stronger the affiliation, the more an individual will behave as a group member, highly concerned about the relative status of the ingroup versus an outgroup competitor and highly biased toward the ingroup. Furthermore, one study by Turner, Hogg, Turner and Smith (1984) suggests that when an identity is chosen instead of assigned, like a partisan identity often is, group members demonstrate higher levels of group cohesion and commitment. Partisan identities are thus ripe opportunities for passionate group association. As partisan identity grows stronger, therefore, levels of ingroup bias against any outgroup party should increase².

Ingroup Bias

In a study done by Munro, Zirpoli, Schuman and Taulbee (2013), strong Democrats and strong Republicans were asked to read political party and candidate brochures labeled with either their ingroup party or a third party that is ideologically similar to the ingroup party. Other than the party labels, the brochures were identical. The study participants reliably evaluated their own party's ideologically-identical brochure more favorably and indicated a stronger willingness to vote for the inparty candidate, even when strategic voting was eliminated as a possible motive. This study supports the social identity concept that there is a psychological force *independent of*

² It is interesting to note that much of the work in political science that argued for an instrumental view of partisanship was conducted during a time when the strength of partisan identity in America was at an historic low. These identity-based effects of partisanship on political behavior may therefore have been less readily apparent due to a weak set of partisan group allegiances. As the strength of partisanship in the electorate increased, it has perhaps become increasingly easy to identify partisan identities as social identities with all the behavioral and psychological consequences they imply.

issue content that creates bias in favor of the ingroup party. Strong group identifiers have also been found to view the outgroup as more homogeneous than the ingroup (Ostrom and Sedikides, 1992), allowing group members to more easily engage in bias against the outgroup as a whole. Partisans, therefore, may say that they prefer their party because of the party's positions on issues, but at some level they also prefer the party simply because it is their home team. They receive psychological benefits if they understand their party to be superior to the opposing party, and they are motivationally predisposed to do so.

A second effect of social identity on ingroup bias only appears in the presence of direct competition or a threat to the social group. In these situations, group identity can motivate not only ingroup favoritism but also outgroup derogation. In particular, when groups come under threat, group dynamics change from simply privileging the ingroup to disliking and taking action against the outgroup (Schlueter, Schmidt and Wagner, 2008). Branscombe and Wann (1994) found that strongly-identified Americans who watched a boxing match between an American and a Russian in which the Russian won (a threat to American status) were more discriminatory toward Russians in general, calling them untrustworthy, hostile, thieving and the cause of the arms race. Those with weak American identities and those who saw a match in which the American won (no threat to American status) did not exhibit this outgroup derogation. Threat, therefore, in combination with a strong group identity, can motivate prejudice and discrimination against the outgroup. This derogation has been found to take place particularly when the relevant groups are competing over tangible issues such as political resources (Stephan and Stephan, 2000), as in the case of most partisan competitions.

These results are important in the context of partisan identity, in which threats are nearly ever-present. To begin, elections occur every two years, setting up a public competition over political resources and group status, with a very public winner and loser. An electoral loss is not simply a loss of decision-making control, it damages the first imperative of a social identity – a positively distinguished group. It hurts to lose. Furthermore, media coverage of votes in Congress is regularly framed in language focused on which party will win, rather than the outcomes of the policies under consideration. Partisans feel threats to the public status of their groups on a regular basis. When partisans are strongly affiliated with the party, these threats are enough to drive prejudice and anger against the outgroup and action to redeem the ingroup by defeating the opposing team.

Collective Action

Ingroup bias is not the only outcome of a strongly held social identity. Social identities can also motivate political action, also specifically when the ingroup is under threat (Tajfel, 1981). Simon et al (1998) found that the more strongly a person identified with the gay movement or the Gray Panthers, the more willing they were to participate in political action. Kelly and Breinlinger (1996) found that identification as a woman increased the likelihood of participating in the women's movement. De Weerd and Klandermans (1999) discovered that social identification as a farmer increased action preparedness and actual farmers' protest participation. Ethier and Deaux (1994) observed that strongly identified Hispanic college students become more engaged in group-based cultural activities when placed in an unfamiliar environment. Mason, Huddy and Aaroe (2010) demonstrated that a stronger partisan identity increased intentions to donate to and

volunteer for a political campaign in the context of an election. Mackie, Devos and Smith (2000) found that strong group identifiers were more likely to take action against a threatening outgroup.

It is tempting to argue that these actions are all driven by instrumental concerns. Group members take action because they will directly benefit from the success of their group's objectives. But in most of these cases, the difference between the strong group identifier and the weak group identifier is simply the individual's psychological attachment to the group. A weakly identified farmer will reap the same benefits from political action as a strongly identified farmer, and yet only the strongly identified farmer takes action. The identification with the group drives the group member to take action to maintain positive group status, in line with the first imperative of a social identity.

Partisans should be more likely to participate in politics not simply because the party holds sympathetic issue positions, but because the party is their team, it is under threat, and they are compelled to do something to maintain its status. As Klandermans (2003) explains, "People participate not so much because of the outcomes associated with participation but because they identify with the other participants... participation generated by the identity pathway is a form of automatic behavior, whereas participation brought forward by the instrumental pathway is a form of reasoned action." (p. 687).

Partisans are compelled to participate in politics by social and psychological motivations that are separable from the more reasoned influence of issue position outcomes.

Furthermore, a growing body of research has shown that individual emotions such as anger are capable of driving group-based action³. Valentino et al (2011) found that anger was strongly related to participation in the 2008 election, including actions such as signing petitions, registering others to vote and participating in political protests. Van Zomeren, Spears and Leach (2008) discovered that a strong group identity increased collective action tendencies *via* group-based anger. That is, when members of a social group (students) were presented with a threat (raising student fees), they reacted with anger and this anger precipitated collective action. Partisan identities therefore are capable of driving political action via motivations to maintain group status and by driving angry reactions to threat.

Anger

One of the more visible elements of increased behavioral polarization is the proliferation of anger in political interaction. From television invective to raucous demonstrations, political anger is increasingly on display in the political realm. This anger can be understood as a very natural reaction to the threats that partisans face on a regular basis. As elections grow longer and political media coverage explains governing as a constant competition between Democrats and Republicans, partisans are inundated with messages that their group is in the midst of a fight for superiority over the outgroup. Every vote in Congress, then, has the potential to feel like a threat to an attentive partisan. These party threats are capable of motivating significant levels of anger in party identifiers, driven not

³ Other emotions such as enthusiasm and anxiety have been shown to have their own effects on political action and engagement, but this project is intentionally limiting the discussion and results to the effects of anger, an indicator of public discord and a key element of behavioral polarization.

simply by a dissatisfaction with potential policy outcomes, but by a much deeper, more primal psychological reaction to group threat.

Intergroup emotions theory (an outgrowth of social identity theory) has found that strongly identified members of groups react with stronger emotions, in particular anger, to group threats (Mackie, Devos and Smith, 2000; Smith, Seger and Mackie, 2007). According to this theory, group-based partisan bias leads strongly identified partisans to believe (correctly or not) that their party is the generally favored party, that Americans like them the best, and the sense that the party is strong, enjoying collective support, increases their ability to feel anger and engage in confrontational behavior. This is because, consistent with the appraisal theory element of intergroup emotions theory, when the ingroup is perceived to be stronger than the outgroup, anger results from intergroup competition, while the perception of a weak ingroup leads to anxiety in the face of group competition. These are natural psychological reactions to group competition, and are driven not by logical thoughts about the concrete outcomes of an intergroup competition, but by evolutionarily advantageous reactions to group competition and threat. A strong group is in a powerful position to react to threat with anger and offense, while a weak group is not. Partisan anger is therefore driven not only from a loss of tangible resources, but is also an outgrowth of natural offensive behavior that emerges from faith in the power of the ingroup and the aggressive tendencies that group allegiance allows.

These three behavioral outcomes – bias, action and anger – have been well-studied in the realm of social identities. They are reliable reactions to being part of a group. However, these contributions from social identity theory contradict a purely

instrumental view of partisan identity. The natural emotional and behavioral reactions to group membership lead a partisan to behave more like a sports fan than like a banker choosing an investment. Partisans feel emotionally connected to the welfare of the party, they prefer to spend time with other members of the party, and when the party is threatened they become angry and work to help conquer the threat, even if they disagree with some of the issue positions taken by the party. The connection between partisan and party is an emotional and social one, as well as a logical one. The result of this is that, as David Brooks elaborates above, elections are not only referenda on the correct path of the country's policies, but they are also, independent of issue content, status competitions. There are emotional and behavioral outcomes of these status competitions, as the two parties vie not only for the power to make issue choices, but also for the feel-good status of winner. These two things, the power to make issue choices and victorious group status, are not equivalent electoral outcomes from a psychological standpoint. The benefits attained by a group status victory are largely emotional and psychological, while the benefits attained by acquiring the power to make issue choices likely have substantial cognitive elements. Hence, a great deal of the electorate's emotional and psychological responses to an election can be attributed to the intergroup dynamic of an election.

Thus, when we think of partisanship as a social identity, four testable outcomes emerge regarding the political behavior and emotion that are defined here as *behavioral polarization*: stronger partisan identity leads to higher levels of (1) bias, (2) activism and (3) anger, and (4) these results do not require concomitant issue position polarization.

The Role of Partisan Sorting

Partisanship is the most salient political identity because parties are the groups that directly compete for power in the political realm, and competition between groups increases the salience of the competing group identities. As Tajfel and Turner (1979) write, “the more intense is an intergroup conflict, the more likely it is that the individuals who are members of the opposing groups will behave toward each other as a function of their respective group memberships.” As discussed in Chapter 2, recent work by Malka and Lelkes (2010) has established that ideology – whether a person considers him/herself conservative or liberal – does function as a social identity, one that is separable from held issue positions. Ideological identity should therefore also be capable of affecting political behavior, though to a lesser extent than partisanship due to partisanship’s greater centrality to political competition and thus greater salience. Similarly, other politically-linked identities such as race, religion and political movement identities should also affect political behavior through the same social identity mechanisms, but also to a lesser extent than partisanship itself. The following analyses therefore focus on partisan identity as the central political identity, but the interaction between partisan and other political identities is a crucial factor in motivating behavioral polarization.

This is because the characterization of partisanship and ideology as social identities only goes partway toward explaining the increase in behavioral polarization over the last few decades. Specifically, it explains current levels of polarization, but not why polarization has been increasing. Recent research has found that ingroup bias (Levendusky, 2009; Mason, 2013), rates of political activism (Abramowitz, 2010; Mason, 2013), and anger at the outgroup presidential candidate (Mason, 2013) have been

increasing. If political identity is a primary driver of ingroup bias, activism and anger, why would these things increase over time? What could be causing a strengthening of our political identities?

In research that extends the findings of social identity theory, Marilynn Brewer and colleagues have examined the psychological effects of holding multiple social identities (Brewer, 1999; Roccas and Brewer, 2002; Brewer and Pierce, 2005). They have found that when group identities are non-aligned, or cross-cutting, individuals are generally found to be more tolerant, less-biased and more positive toward outgroups. And conversely, those whose identities are aligned to the extent that they are seen as one identity are more likely to be intolerant, biased and feel negatively toward outgroups. Identities can be said to be aligned when a large portion of the members of one group are (or are believed to be) also members of the other group. As an example, people who are Irish and Catholic (highly aligned national and religious identities) are more likely to be intolerant of non-Irish people than are people who are Irish and Jewish (relatively unaligned national and religious identities). This is because unaligned identities undermine the cognitive and motivational bases of ingroup bias and negative emotion by reducing the perceived differences between the groups, and allowing an individual to feel like s/he belongs to and is defined by a broader range of groups. Bettencourt and Dorr (1998) experimentally demonstrated that when Democrats and Republicans were assigned to cross-cutting subgroups based on aptitude at a particular project, ingroup bias between the partisans decreased.

On a more concrete level, a highly aligned set of identities is also likely to decrease an individual's exposure to members of an outgroup. According to Allport's

(1954) intergroup contact hypothesis, interaction between members of different groups can, under the right circumstances, reduce prejudice against that outgroup. A homogeneous set of social identities reduces the chance for that outgroup exposure. Mutz (2002a) has found that, in fact, cross-cutting political identities do reduce intolerance toward outgroups by giving people the “capacity to see that there is more than one side to an issue, that a political conflict is, in fact, a *legitimate* controversy with rationales on both sides” (p. 122). Without this exposure to members of the political outgroup, it becomes far easier to view opponents with prejudice, and their values as illegitimate.

Furthermore, Roccas and Brewer (2002) raise the possibility that those with highly aligned identities may be less psychologically equipped to cope with threat due to their relative inexperience with measured conflict, and may feel higher levels of negative emotions when confronted with threat. While stronger identities have been shown to motivate increased anger in the face of group threat, more sorted identities are very likely to have an even larger effect. Because a highly sorted set of identities increases an individual’s perceived differences between groups, the negative emotions that result from group conflict are likely to be heightened among individuals with highly sorted political identities. Thus, while anecdotal stories of political anger appear to be provoked largely by issues such as health care reform, gay marriage, abortion and taxation, the theory presented here suggests that, in fact, identity sorting is capable of playing a powerful role in driving anger, undercutting the perception that only practical disagreements are driving higher levels of political rancor.

Once we understand political identities as social identities with the capacity for being aligned or unaligned, it is possible to predict that a member of a party that is *unaligned* with his/her ideology, religion, race or political movement would feel less bias and anger toward the opposing party than a member of the same party whose ideology, religion, race and/or political movement identity is aligned with his/her party. The bias and anger are psychological responses to the interaction between identities, and do not require those identities to contain highly extreme issue content or outcomes. The response is based on the strength and alignment of the identities, not the content of the identity-linked issue positions. In fact, Erisen and Erisen (2012) have found that reasoning about political issues suffers when social networks are insular, or aligned. Highly aligned social identities therefore decrease the quality of issue-based political thought, further disconnecting the concrete political objectives from the group-based psychological responses. Partisans thus do not need to hold wildly extreme issue positions in order to grow increasingly biased against and angry at their opponents. They simply need to hold aligned political identities. Once partisans are sorted, therefore, it can be expected that they will experience higher levels of ingroup bias, anger and the political action that is driven by anger and partisan identity strength. As identities come into alignment, the motivating effects of the defense of these social groups, combined with the motivation derived from anger, will promote more activism.

Furthermore, part of the reason for evidence of increased ingroup bias among individuals with aligned identities may be that, consistent with the cross-pressures literature, an aligned identity is a stronger identity. In other words, Democrats who identify as liberals will be more strongly affiliated Democrats than Democrats who

identify as conservatives, and this will lead to all of the consequences of a stronger identity: increased ingroup bias, activism and angry response to threat.

The gradual sorting of partisans into the “correct” parties during the last 50 years has transformed a nation of cross-cutting partisan identities into a nation of aligned partisan identities. Because identity alignment takes account of multiple political identities and narrows an individual’s view of the complexity of their social world, it should be a more powerful predictor of behavioral polarization than partisan identity alone. Identity alignment, or political sorting, should also be capable of motivating behavioral polarization even when issue positions are held constant, despite the supposed centrality of issues to political decisions.

The power of social group identities to motivate behavior such as bias, activism and anger is not theoretically contingent on the extremity or importance of a partisan’s political issue positions. In fact, it is possible for the alignment of political identities to affect behavior to a degree that surpasses the effects of issue positions. If this is the case, it will become apparent that increases in behavioral polarization are not derived from concomitant changes in issue position polarization, and that political sorting has had an independent effect on political behavior, allowing partisans to behave as if they are polarized, even if they hold similar political beliefs. Finally, due to the known behavioral effects of identity alignment, political identity sorting likely has a larger effect on mass behavior and emotion than it does on issue positions, thus allowing Americans to behave as if they are more polarized than their issue positions alone would suggest.

Thus, in regards to sorting, five testable outcomes emerge regarding the political behavior and emotion that are defined here as *behavioral polarization*: more sorted identities lead to higher levels of (1) bias, (2) activism and (3) anger, (4) these effects surpass those of partisan identity alone, and (5) these results do not require concomitant issue position polarization. The following chapters will examine these questions.

Chapter 4 – Data and Methods

The data used to examine the relationship between identity, sorting and polarization are drawn from two sources. First, the American National Election Study includes nationally-representative samples of American adults, surveyed every election year. This data set is useful because it involves a very large sample examined over time, so that changes in the American population can be determined, and broad conclusions can be drawn from the results. There are three major limitations of this data, however. First, it does not include any of the political identity items that I would like to use in order to effectively measure partisan identity. Work by Stephen Greene (1999, 2000, 2004) has shown that the traditional 7-point scale of partisan identity is woefully inadequate for measuring partisanship as a social identity. In fact, Greene finds that when partisan identity is measured using an index of 10 items meant to gauge the level of group membership, it is far more powerful in predicting political behavior than is the traditional partisan scale. Other work has found that a 4-item index is sufficient to provide a solid measure of political identity that strongly predicts political behavior and emotion (Huddy and Khatib, 2007), and I prefer to use this shorter battery of items. In fact, recent work I have done with Leonie Huddy and Lene Aaroe has shown the superiority of the social identity-based measure in assessing the effects of partisan identity on behavior (Mason, Huddy and Aaroe, 2010). Furthermore, none of the other political identities that I am interested in (ideology, religion, race, movement-based identity) are measured in a way that taps the strength of the social identity.

Second, the measure of ingroup bias in the ANES dataset is limited to partisan feeling thermometers and responses to the open-ended party likes and dislikes items. In addition to these variables, I prefer to use items I discuss below that tap willingness to

engage socially with members of the opposing party, as I believe that this has true bearing on political behavior and gets at a deeper question of whether partisans of opposing parties can, at a basic social level, get along with each other.

Third, the ANES data include only a very limited measure of emotional reactions to partisan threat, and a deficient measure of threat itself. If I consider the outgroup presidential candidate as a threat to ingroup party status (a valid, but weak assessment of threat), the ANES does assess a simple Yes or No response set to an item regarding whether the respondent has felt angry at the particular candidate. This is a dichotomous measure of anger in response to threat, and it is also highly candidate-dependent, two relatively large limitations to the dependent variable. As this is one of the three predicted consequences of increased partisan identity and partisan sorting, a better measure of both partisan threat and anger are required.

Due to these limitations, in order to test the key hypotheses more completely, this study required the collection of new data. The second data set, described below, is an adult sample collected by Polimetrix in November of 2011.

The data, measures and operationalizations from both datasets are described below.

ANES Data

Data are drawn from the American National Election Studies cumulative data file, restricted to years 1972 (when ideology is first available) through 2004, and the ANES Panel Study conducted from 1992 to 1996. The 1992-1996 Panel is used for two reasons. First, the period from 1992 to 1996 was a time when political identity sorting was in flux to a greater extent than in the period from 2000 to 2004 (the more recent ANES Panel

data). In the cumulative ANES file, between 1992 and 1996 identity sorting increased from a mean of .24 to a mean of .28, a significant difference. Between 2000 and 2004, no significant difference is observed. Second, the 2004 Panel data surprisingly does not include the seven-point measure of ideology in all waves of the panel, a crucial element in the measurement of identity sorting, thus making it unusable for the purposes of this study.

Measures

Partisan identity strength is a four-point scale, ranging from 0 (pure Independent) to 1 (Strong Democrat or Republican). This is an admittedly weak measure of social identity, and the results that follow would likely be significantly strengthened if a social-identity-oriented measure of partisanship or ideology were available in the ANES. Mason, Huddy and Aaroe (2010) have found the relationship between partisan identity and behavioral polarization to be significantly stronger with a social identity-based measure than with the traditional measure used here. The results here should therefore be viewed as a conservative test of the relationship between partisan and ideological identity and behavioral polarization.

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

The *Partisan-Ideological Sorting* score is one of the central measures of the analyses and is not a common measure in political science literature. The work in social identity theory by Roccas and Brewer (2002) uses a subjective measure when attempting to assess identity alignment, asking respondents to gauge (1) the extent of the overlap and similarity between each of their ingroups, and (2) the extent of their attachment to those groups. For this study, I choose to maintain Roccas and Brewer's use of a subjective measure of attachment to the ingroup, but not to use a subjective measure of alignment between the groups, as this type of measure, when applied to party and ideology, could be confused for a measure of something other than sorting. In fact, determining the extent to which a subject understands Democrats to be more liberal than Republicans has been

⁴ There is a non-response problem with the ideology item in the ANES data set. In the portion of the cumulative ANES file used here (beginning in 1972), slightly less than a third of the sample either did not answer or responded "don't know" or "haven't thought much about it" to the ideology item. All of these non-responses were treated as missing data. This was done because imputing the values from other variables in the dataset would be most effective if partisanship were included as an indicator. However, because the relationship between partisanship and ideology is a key explanatory variable, imputing the value of ideology from partisanship would contaminate the measure of sorting. In the 1992-1996 Panel data, the "don't know" and "haven't thought" response was followed up in 1992 by an item that prompts, "If you had to choose, would you consider yourself a liberal or a conservative?" All the models that rely on the 1992-1996 panel code the respondents who answer this item as weak liberals or conservatives, restoring ideological identity scores for 75 percent of those respondents who answered "don't know" or "haven't thought" in 1992. In 1996, the follow-up item was also asked of those who responded "moderate" to the ideology prompt. Ideology scores were restored for 87 percent of those who responded "don't know," "haven't thought," or "moderate" in 1996. However, the ideological strength (and thus sorting) items used here are coded such that those who answered "moderate" in the primary ideology item are given an ideological strength score of 0, just as in 1992. The sorting scores in 1992 and 1996 are therefore comparable measures.

used as a measure of political interest, party cues, elite polarization and sophistication, among other things (Hetherington, 2001; Levendusky, 2009; Converse, 1964). For this study, therefore, the measure of group alignment needs to be a more objective measure. Levendusky (2009) uses an objective measure of sorting, but this is a dichotomous measure, indicating whether or not the respondent is on the “correct” side of the ideological scale in relation to their partisanship. Unfortunately, this measure cannot assess whether there are differences in degree in the level of sorting of each individual. I expect that there is a great deal of variation in identity alignment between, for example, extremely liberal strong Democrats on one end of the spectrum and extremely conservative strong Democrats on the other. Not accounting for this variation removes a great deal of power from the analyses. This study therefore requires a more continuous measure of sorting.

Due to the limitations of the ANES data, I have constructed the partisan-ideological sorting score in a different manner than the multiple-identity sorting score used in the Polimetrix data, but both measures are constructed to assess (1) the objective alignment between a respondent’s ingroup identities, (2) accounting for the subjective strength of those identities. The objective alignment is weighted by the strength of the relevant ingroup identities in order to correctly distinguish respondents whose identities are technically highly aligned but very weak. Without this weighting, a respondent who is ideologically moderate and purely Independent would receive the same alignment score as an extremely Liberal strong Democrat. The Independent/moderate identity is often a *lack* of an identity, and would not indicate the same level of sorting that would be

represented by those respondents who hold fully aligned and strong partisan and ideological identities. Sorting cannot occur without identities to sort.

The objective alignment part of the score determines whether and to what degree an individual's ingroup identities are combined in a way that is similar to the combination of identities normally seen in the American population. In the ANES data set, this is operationalized as an *identity alignment score*, the absolute difference between the standard 7-point ANES party identity score and the standard 7-point ANES ideology item score, both of which are coded such that high values represent strong Republicans or extreme conservatives, identities that are objectively aligned in American politics. This difference score is reverse-coded so that higher values indicate more aligned identities, and initially coded to range from 1 to 7. As an example, an extremely liberal strong Democrat would score 7, while an extremely conservative strong Democrat would score 1. However, on the *identity alignment score* a moderate pure Independent would also score 7. In order to account for this, the *identity alignment score* is multiplied by the *partisan identity strength* score and the *ideological identity strength* score⁵. The final sorting score is recoded to range from 0 (least aligned, weakest identities) to 1 (most aligned, strongest identities).

In this operationalization, the lowest sorting score is given to moderate/independents rather than, for example, strong Democrats/strong conservatives. From a social identity perspective, identity alignment doesn't exist if one or more of the identities are not part of the respondent's set of social identities. As Brewer (2000)

⁵ For the purposes of coding the sorting score, the partisan and ideological strength scores are coded to range from 1 to 4, so that a score of 0 (moderate) would not reduce the entire sorting score to 0.

explains, “in order for crossed categories to have psychological effects, two or more category distinctions must have functional significance within the same social context” (p. 174). In the current construction, therefore, any moderate or independent scores slightly lower on the sorting scale than any respondent who has strong and conflicting identities. This choice was made consciously, due to the central focus of this project on the importance of social identity. I believe that the sorting scale as it is currently constructed fairly, if somewhat noisily, represents the range of identity sorting in the American electorate. For the full list of all partisan combinations by sorting category, see Appendix 4.1.

An alternative construction was considered in which all “mismatched” party and ideology combinations automatically received a score of zero. The choice to use the current construction rather than the alternate construction was made after extensive deliberation. First, the alternative construction significantly reduced the variance of the measure. Second, this alternative measure essentially dichotomized half of the sorting measure, presupposing that there is no difference between an extremely conservative strong Democrat and a weakly conservative strong Democrat. In terms of sorting, I believe that a weakly conservative strong Democrat is slightly more sorted than an extremely conservative strong Democrat, and in the current measure, the weakly conservative strong Democrat receives a higher sorting score than the extremely conservative strong Democrat.

Issue Position extremity is used in the ANES analyses as the measure of issue polarization. Again, due to the limitations of the ANES data, it is measured differently here than it will be in the Polimetrix data, and this comes with one major limitation,

which is that there is no reliable measure of issue importance for every issue in each year, eliminating the possibility of assessing issue salience in addition to issue extremity. However, Fiorina's conception of polarization is a "bimodal distribution of aggregate opinion," suggesting that issue polarization can fairly be measured by assessing how close people are to the extreme ends of the issue response options.

Issue position extremity is thus operationalized as an index of six political issue items whose response sets are folded in half such that the index is coded to range from 0 (weakest issue positions) to 1 (strongest issue positions on both ends of the spectrum). The six issues are chosen because they are the only issues that are available consistently from 1980 to 2004⁶. The issues include the ANES items (1) when should abortion be allowed by law (4 point scale); (2) prioritize government services vs. spending (7 point scale); (3) government's role in health insurance (7 point scale); (4) aid to minorities/blacks (7 point scale); (5) defense spending (7 point scale); (6) should government guarantee jobs (7 point scale).

This is a well-differentiated measure – 314 respondents or 3.16 percent of the sample score 0 on the scale, while 236 respondents or 2.37 percent of the sample score 1. The median score is .44 and the mean score is .45.

One potential criticism of using issue extremity as a measure of issue polarization is that what matters is not how *extreme* citizens' opinions are but, in fact, how *constrained* they are. As citizens are increasingly capable of organizing their political

⁶ One issue, whether women's role should be in the home, is available consistently but is strongly skewed toward the liberal end of the response range for both Republicans and Democrats, and was thus not included.

opinions into party-consistent clusters, it could be argued that they are becoming increasingly polarized, even if they are not moving into Fiorina's bimodal distribution of issue opinions. I therefore include a measure of *issue constraint*, measured as the standard deviation from the mean of the six issue items (Barton and Parsons, 1977).

Behavioral polarization is the key conceptual competitor to issue polarization, and it is measured according to the predictions of social identity theory discussed in Chapter 3. Rather than an increasing level of issue position extremity and disagreement in the electorate, behavioral polarization is understood as the behavioral and psychological consequences of political identities and the alignment between them. It is not a measure of how much people logically disagree, but of how much they behave and feel as if they are members of entirely different tribes. The elements of behavioral polarization are drawn not from practical disagreements between partisans over political issue outcomes, but are natural, universal reactions to being a member of one or more groups and to seeing those groups threatened. The first of these reactions is ingroup bias, which here is partisan bias- the sense that the ingroup party is superior to the outgroup party. The second result of group membership and alignment is an increased willingness to take action on behalf of the group when it is under threat from the outgroup (for instance, in the case of an election). In the study of political parties, this takes the form of political activism. The third result of feeling part of one or more overlapping groups is increased feelings of anger when the ingroup is threatened. The three elements of behavioral polarization are thus partisan bias, activism and anger.

Partisan Bias is measured in two ways. *Thermometer Bias* is a continuous scale measuring the difference between the respondent's placement of Democrats and

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

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

Anger is a dummy variable coded 1 if the respondent reported feeling anger at his/her outgroup presidential candidate. This is an admittedly weak measure both of anger and of the threat that is required to precipitate anger in a group identifier. However, it is the best available measure in the ANES dataset. The outgroup presidential candidate represents the threat to the ingroup, and the partisan can respond to that threat with anger or without anger.

Controls are included for education, sex (dummy), white race (dummy), age, southern residence (dummy), urban residence (dummy), frequency of church attendance (as a measure of religious commitment) and evangelicalism (as a measure of religious

conservatism, a dummy variable). All continuous variables are coded to range from 0 to 1.

Polimetrix Data

Data are drawn from an adult sample collected by YouGov Polimetrix, using funding from the National Science Foundation under Grant No. SES-1065054. 1,100 respondents answered a web-based survey conducted by Polimetrix during November of 2011. Polimetrix maintains a panel of respondents, which it recruits through their polling website in return for incentives. Since recruitment into the panel is voluntary, the sample may be unrepresentative of the national population. However, sample matching was employed to draw a close to nationally representative sample from the larger, non-representative sample. The matching results in a sample that has the most similar characteristics to the national population as is possible. This sample was balanced between Democrats and Republicans.

Measures⁷

In the Polimetrix data, it was possible to more precisely measure political identities using a social identity measurement approach. These are far preferable measures of identity than those available in the ANES data, and allow for more thorough and theoretically appropriate variable construction with more variance than the ANES measures allow.

Partisan identity is a scale introduced and tested by Mason, Huddy and Aaroe (2010), based on items often found in social –psychological identity scales (Luhtanen and Crocker, 1992; Crocker et al., 1994; see also Huddy 2003). The scale is made up of four items, including (1) How important is being a Democrat/Republican to you? (2) How

⁷ Exact wording of all items is included in Appendix 4.2.

well does the term Democrat/Republican describe you? (3) When talking about Democrats/Republicans how often do you use “we” instead of “they”? (4) To what extent do you think of yourself as being a Democrat/Republican? These items form a reliable scale ($\alpha=.90$). This measure is coded to range from 0 to 1⁸.

Ideological identity is identical to the *partisan identity* scale, except that the four items used to make up the scale replaced the term “Democrat” or “Republican” with “Liberal” or “Conservative.” The four items form a reliable scale ($\alpha=.81$).

Multiple Identity Sorting is a different measure of sorting than the one used in the ANES data. First of all, it includes multiple party-linked identities, rather than simply party and ideology. Second, each of these identities is measured using a four-item identity scale, providing a greater level of precision in determining differences in group identity strength. However, just as in the ANES measure of sorting, it is constructed to assess (1) the objective alignment between a respondent’s ingroup identities, (2) accounting for the subjective strength of those identities. It is the manner of construction that is different.

The *multiple identity sorting* scale begins with assessing the subjective strength of various political identities. It includes the *partisan identity* and *ideological identity* scales, as well as identity scales created to measure the strength of Evangelical, Secular, African-American and Tea Party identities. These additional identity scales are created in the same manner as the partisan and ideological identity measures, and also form reliable

⁸ The scale is created using the means of the four identity variables, ignoring missing values. For example, if, in some observations, one of the variables is missing, in those observations the identity score will contain the mean of the three variables that do exist.

scales - Evangelical ($\alpha=.88$), Secular($\alpha=.80$), African-American($\alpha=.78$)⁹ and Tea Party($\alpha=.90$) (see Appendix 4.2 for exact wording of all identity items).

The objective alignment of these various political identities is assessed by linking each non-party identity to one of the two parties according to linkages found in prior research, and also verified by examining the mean level of each identity for each party separately in the current dataset (this is discussed further in Chapter 7). Aligned identities are found to be, for the Democratic party- liberal, secular and African-American identities, and for the Republican party- conservative, evangelical and tea party identities.

The identity scales are combined such that, for each party, aligned identities are coded with positive values while unaligned identities are coded negatively. The mean of all identity scale scores is then taken, with aligned identities increasing the total value and unaligned identities decreasing the final score. The final measure is recoded to range from 0 to 1, with 0 representing consistently weak or totally unaligned identities and 1 representing the strongest, most consistently aligned identities. For an examination of the marginal effects of each of these identities, see Appendix 4.3.

⁹ Including African-American identity in the identity alignment scale could be problematic, as it implies that a white Democrat can never have the same kind of identity alignment as an African-American Democrat. However, the importance of racial identity in political identity alignment was judged to be important enough to include. As a check, all models were run with African-American identity removed from the identity alignment scale. This did not change any of the substantive conclusions. It had no effect on the size of the identity alignment coefficient in predicting thermometer bias, slightly reduced the size of the identity alignment coefficient in predicting social distance and activism, and slightly increased the size of the identity alignment interactive coefficient in predicting anger.

Issue Position Polarization is an index of five generally-salient political issues, but in this dataset it is possible to weight the extremity of each issue position by the rated importance of each one. The issues include (1) should the number of legally permitted immigrants be increased or decreased; (2) support or opposition to health care reforms passed by Congress in 2010; (3) should abortion be permitted; (4) support or opposition to same-sex marriage; and (5) which is more important – reducing the deficit or reducing unemployment (see Appendix 4.2 for exact wording of issue items). These items form a reliable scale ($\alpha=.76$). Each issue position is weighted by an *issue importance* item, created from follow-up items presented after every issue position item asking “How important is this issue to you?” The full weighted index is then folded in half and coded to range from 0 (weakest, least important issue positions) to 1 (strongest, most important issue positions on both ends of the spectrum).

Behavioral Polarization

In the Polimetrix dataset, it is possible to introduce measures of behavioral polarization that are more consistent with the predictions of social identity theory. There are two main advantages gained by this dataset. The first is a more social measure of ingroup bias that is capable of measuring not simply attitudes toward the outgroup party in a broad way, but can assess the willingness of group members to associate with individual members of the outgroup on a social basis. This is adapted from the Bogardus social distance scale (Bogardus, 1926).

The second advantage of the Polimetrix dataset is that it includes an experimental manipulation designed to induce anger in partisans by threatening the ingroup party, and

it measures anger using a three-item scale, allowing for a more precise assessment of partisan responses to group threat. According to social identity theory, anger should be elicited from group members only in the presence of a threat to the group. In the ANES data, the outgroup presidential candidate had to be used as a vague representation of party threat, but in the Polimetrix data threat can be experimentally manipulated and randomly assigned. This allows for the ability to isolate the effects of partisan threats, and to determine precisely how partisan identity and alignment interact with group threats to drive anger.

As in the ANES, *Partisan Bias* is measured in two ways, though the like bias used in the ANES analyses has been replaced with social distance bias. *Thermometer Bias* is the same as used in the ANES data- simply the difference between the respondent's placement of Democrats and Republicans on the feeling thermometer, consistent with Brewer and Pierce (2005) and Levendusky (2009). *Social Distance Bias* includes items based on those used by Roccas and Brewer (2002), rewritten to gauge willingness to engage in social contact with members of the partisan outgroup and ingroup in four domains: occasionally spending social time, next-door neighbor, intimate friend, getting married¹⁰. Responses fall on a 5-point scale of willingness ranging from 1 (I definitely would) to 4 (I definitely would not) (see Appendix 4.2 for exact wording). These four items formed a reliable scale regarding the outparty ($\alpha=.87$) and the inparty ($\alpha=.95$) The social distance bias score is the difference between the inparty and outparty social distance score. Both measures of partisan bias are coded to range from 0 (least bias, or

¹⁰ These items are ultimately derived from the Bogardus social distance scale (Bogardus (1926).

most even assessment of the two parties) to 1 (most bias, or most uneven assessment of the two parties).

Activism is assessed with four items asking respondents whether they plan to contribute money to (1) candidates or (2) political organizations, or plan to (3) volunteer for candidates, or (4) political organizations in the 2012 presidential election (see Appendix 4.2 for exact wording). These four questions formed a reliable scale ($\alpha=.85$). The scale is coded to range from 0 to 1.

Anger is measured as the extent to which respondents felt angry, hostile and disgust on a 4-point scale that ranged from a great deal to not at all. These items formed a reliable scale ($\alpha=.91$). These anger assessment items were directly related to an experimental condition, in which respondents were randomly assigned to read a fabricated blog post in which the respondent's party was either threatened with electoral loss or reassured with a message of likely electoral success¹¹ (see Appendix 4.2 for exact wording). Respondents were asked whether reading the manipulation caused them to feel angry, hostile or disgust. *Threat* is coded simply as a dummy variable, with 1 representing the presence of a threat condition and 0 representing a message of reassurance. The control condition was unfortunately not asked about levels of anger.

Control Variables

Sophistication is a scale created from a 5-item knowledge quiz that includes questions about the positions held by Joe Biden, John Roberts, Hillary Clinton, and Eric Holder, and the name of the majority party in the House of Representatives. It is coded

¹¹ The threat and reassurance messages were further broken down into party-based or issue-based messages, but there was no observable statistical difference between responses to these two types of messages, so they are combined for these analyses.

to range from 0 to 1, with 0 representing no correct answers and 1 representing 5 correct answers.

Past activism is a scale created from four items, including (1) Have you ever worked for a political candidate, political party, or any other organization that supports candidates? (2) Have you ever participated in a political protest, march, or demonstration? (3) Have you ever written a letter to your Congressman (or Congresswoman) or any other public official? (4) Have you ever contributed money to a political party or candidate? These items formed a reliable scale ($\alpha=.73$).

Dummy variables are included for white race, black race, Hispanic race and male sex. Income is measured in \$5,000 increments, with a maximum value of \$150,000 or more, coded to range from 0 to 1. Age is measured in decades. Religiosity is also included, measured by frequency of church attendance.

Chapter 5 – Issues versus Behavior

“Dr. Commoner, are you a serious candidate, or are you just running on the issues?”
- A reporter’s question to Barry Commoner during his campaign for president in 1980.
(Vinciguerra, 2007)

The idea that political issue positions can exist separately from political behavior is controversial. Ideally, in a functioning democracy, citizens should take political action and feel politically motivated on behalf of particular political goals they wish to attain. Those goals should be viewed through a clear, unbiased lens, and should be made up of concrete social and economic policies they wish to see enacted. Once we separate our political behavior and emotions from our political issue positions, democracy becomes less about popular input into governmental decisions, and more about popular grudges and biases. It is therefore very important to establish that issue positions can, in fact, be separated from political behavior and emotion. This point is not something that can simply be assumed. In this chapter, therefore, I examine the separateness of behavioral and issue position polarization in four different ways.

First, the polychoric correlations between partisan strength, the four measures of behavioral polarization, and issue position extremity are examined in each presidential election year. Second, the simple trends of the means of each measure are viewed over time. Due to the limited number of time points, a time series analysis is not feasible here, but an examination of the means can establish basic differences in trends. Third, the relationship between behavioral and issue position polarization is examined by demonstrating the differentiated levels of behavioral polarization at four levels of issue position polarization. Finally, the component measures of behavioral and issue position

polarization are included in a principal components factor analysis, and determined to form distinctly separate factors in every presidential election year.

Correlations

Table 5.1 presents polychoric correlations between partisan strength and the four measures of behavioral polarization: thermometer bias, like bias, activism, and anger; and the six-item issue extremity scale. These are drawn from the cumulative ANES data file, examined in each presidential election year¹². As the polarization items are, for the most part, polytomous, a polychoric correlation is appropriate here.

As expected, partisan strength in nearly every year is moderately to strongly correlated with the four measures of behavioral polarization: thermometer bias, like bias, activism and anger. Partisanship is most strongly correlated with thermometer bias in every year, ranging from a low of .45 in 1988 to a high of .53 in 1982. Its correlations with like bias range from .24 in 2000 to .35 in 1992. The correlations between partisanship and activism are somewhat weaker, ranging from .17 in 1988 to .33 in 2004¹³, but partisanship is more strongly correlated with anger, ranging from a correlation of .25 in 1980 to .42 in 1996. In general, there are no discernable trends in the relationship between partisanship and behavioral polarization, it simply remains generally strong.

¹² The anger at the outgroup candidate item is only available in presidential election years. The series begins in 1980 because the issue extremity scale is only available from 1980 onward.

¹³ There is one lower correlation between partisan strength and activism in 2000, but the year 2000 appears to be an outlier year for activism in general.

Table 5.1. Polychoric Correlations between measures of Behavioral Polarization and Issue Position Polarization-by year

1980						
	Partisan Strength	Like Bias	Thermometer Bias	Activism	Anger	Issue Extremity
Partisan Strength	1					
Like Bias	0.31	1.00				
Thermometer Bias	0.46	0.42	1.00			
Activism	0.20	0.19	0.20	1.00		
Anger	0.25	0.27	0.25	0.36	1.00	
Issue Extremity	0.01	0.06	0.11	0.04	0.03	1.00
1984						
	Partisan Strength	Like Bias	Thermometer Bias	Activism	Anger	Issue Extremity
Partisan Strength	1.00					
Like Bias	0.32	1.00				
Thermometer Bias	0.48	0.50	1.00			
Activism	0.25	0.30	0.24	1.00		
Anger	0.36	0.30	0.38	0.29	1.00	
Issue Extremity	0.07	0.07	0.19	0.09	0.03	1.00
1988						
	Partisan Strength	Like Bias	Thermometer Bias	Activism	Anger	Issue Extremity
Partisan Strength	1.00					
Like Bias	0.27	1.00				
Thermometer Bias	0.45	0.36	1.00			
Activism	0.17	0.22	0.21	1.00		
Anger	0.29	0.29	0.31	0.30	1.00	
Issue Extremity	0.06	0.08	0.17	0.04	0.04	1.00
1992						
	Partisan Strength	Like Bias	Thermometer Bias	Activism	Anger	Issue Extremity
Partisan Strength	1.00					
Like Bias	0.35	1.00				
Thermometer Bias	0.53	0.44	1.00			
Activism	0.18	0.27	0.20	1.00		
Anger	0.41	0.40	0.40	0.27	1.00	
Issue Extremity	0.11	0.06	0.18	0.02	0.09	1.00
1996						
	Partisan Strength	Like Bias	Thermometer Bias	Activism	Anger	Issue Extremity
Partisan Strength	1.00					
Like Bias	0.27	1.00				
Thermometer Bias	0.47	0.34	1.00			
Activism	0.24	0.23	0.29	1.00		
Anger	0.42	0.26	0.32	0.35	1.00	
Issue Extremity	0.19	0.03	0.23	0.11	-0.02	1.00

2000

	Partisan Strength	Like Bias	Thermometer Bias	Activism	Anger	Issue Extremity
Partisan Strength	1.00					
Like Bias	0.24	1.00				
Thermometer Bias	0.52	0.38	1.00			
Activism	0.13	0.11	0.13	1.00		
Anger	0.27	0.32	0.31	0.11	1.00	
Issue Extremity	0.02	0.10	0.03	0.02	0.04	1.00

2004

	Partisan Strength	Like Bias	Thermometer Bias	Activism	Anger	Issue Extremity
Partisan Strength	1.00					
Like Bias	0.32	1.00				
Thermometer Bias	0.51	0.45	1.00			
Activism	0.33	0.26	0.31	1.00		
Anger	0.39	0.34	0.44	0.35	1.00	
Issue Extremity	0.09	0.09	0.21	0.14	0.10	1.00

The four measures of behavioral polarization are also related to each other. Leaving aside correlations with activism in 2000, which appears to be an outlier year for activism, the four measures of behavioral polarization are moderately to strongly correlated in every year. Like bias is most weakly correlated with activism in 1980, with a correlation of .19, and is most strongly correlated with thermometer bias in 1984 with a correlation of .50. Thermometer bias is most weakly correlated with activism in 1980 and 1992, with a correlation of .20, and most strongly correlated with like bias in 2004, with a correlation of .45. Activism, not including the year 2000, is most weakly correlated with like bias in 1980, with a correlation of .19, and most strongly correlated with anger, with a correlation of .36 in 1980 and .35 in 2004. Anger is most weakly correlated with thermometer bias in 1980, with a correlation of .25, and also most strongly correlated with thermometer bias in 2004, with a correlation of .44. With the exception of activism in 2000, no correlation among the five behavioral polarization measures drops below .19.

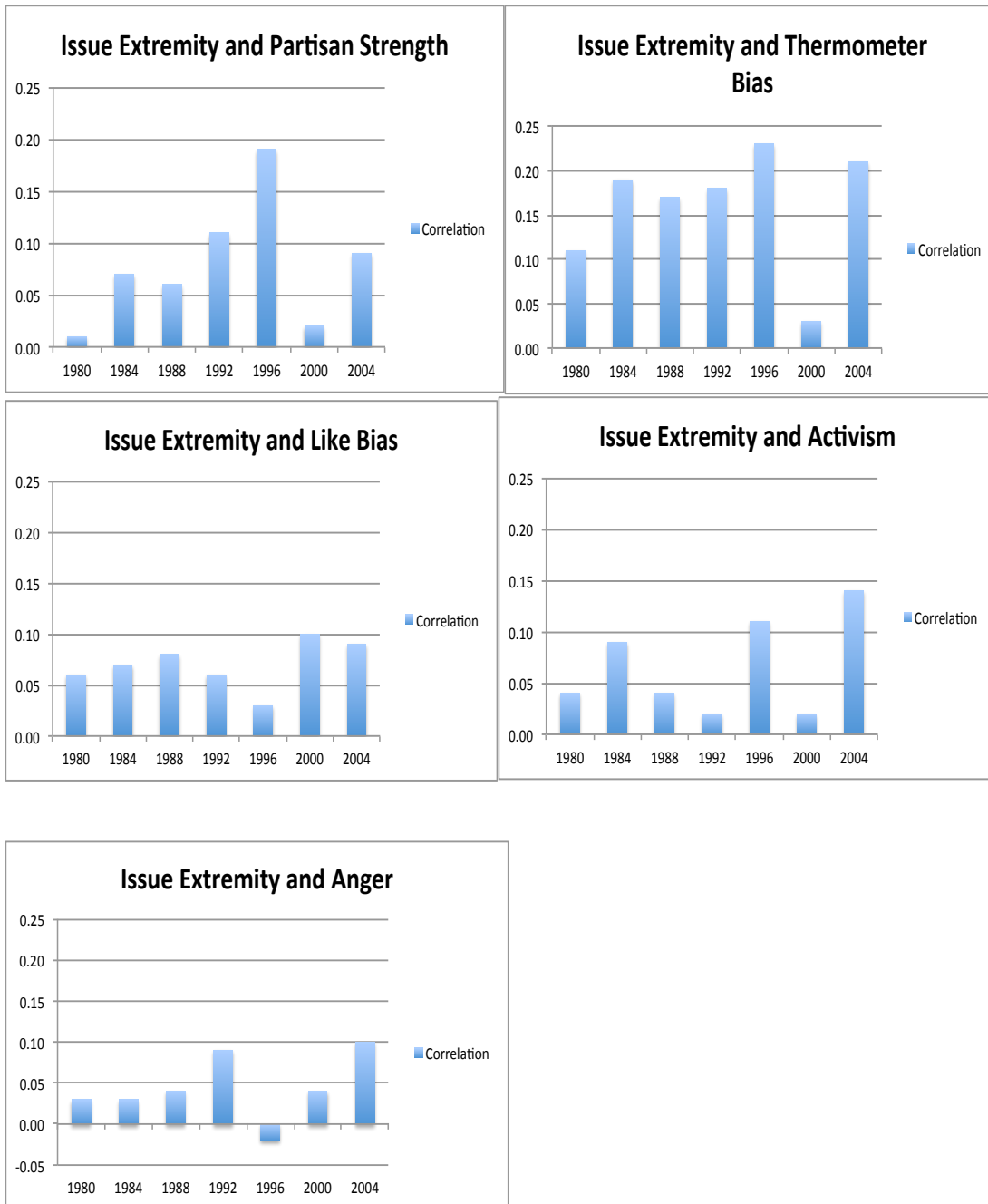
The four behavioral polarization items and partisan strength share a Cronbach's alpha score of .55 in 1980, .63 in 1984, .58 in 1988, .62 in 1992, .60 in 1996, .56 in 2000 and .67 in 2004, suggesting that they hang together moderately well, and that this relationship is relatively stable over time. These results indicate that the four measures of behavioral polarization and partisan identity can be seen as interrelated phenomena. A more strongly partisan individual is likely to also demonstrate partisan bias, be more active in politics, and feel anger toward the other's party's candidates.

However, issue position extremity is significantly less strongly related to these measures of behavioral polarization. It is most strongly correlated with thermometer bias

in every year but 2000, with a maximum correlation with thermometer bias of .23 in 1996. With all other measures of behavioral polarization, issue position extremity is more weakly related. It is most strongly correlated with like bias at .10 in 2000, with activism at .14 in 2004, with anger at .10 in 2004 and with partisan strength at .19 in 1996. The strongest correlation between issue position extremity and behavioral polarization is the same magnitude as the weakest correlation within any of the measures of behavioral polarization.

Furthermore, while correlations between issue polarization and behavioral polarization are slightly higher than normal in 2004, this does not appear to be part of a generally increasing trend between the two types of polarization. Figure 5.1 plots the correlation coefficients between issue position extremity and the four measures of behavioral polarization and partisan identity for a clearer view of the relationships over time. None of the measures of behavioral polarization appear to have a steadily strengthening relationship with issue position extremity over time. Throughout the series presented here, the relationships between issue position extremity and behavioral polarization are generally weak.

Figure 5.1. Correlations between Issue Extremity, Identity and Behavioral Polarization over time



Issue position extremity appears to be only very weakly related to the measures of partisan identity and behavioral polarization in nearly every year. A person with very extreme issue positions is not much more likely than a person with weak issue positions to be a strong partisan or be politically active. They are also not highly likely to be biased in evaluations of their political party or to be angry at a candidate from the opposite party. These correlations suggest that the various measures of behavioral polarization are far more related to each other than they are to issue position polarization and, thus, that these two types of polarization may be separate constructs.

Time trends

The conclusions drawn from the correlations are echoed in an examination of the trends in mean levels of each type of polarization over time. According to the theory elaborated above, behavioral polarization should be relatively unrelated to issue position extremity. They should not rise and fall together, and therefore a simple examination of the means of each over time should provide a clear picture of the disconnect between them. As shown in Figure 5.2, the trends in issue position extremity over time bear very little similarity to the trends in behavioral polarization. Figure 5.2 plots mean levels of issue extremity against mean levels of the various measures of behavioral polarization. Due to differences in the magnitude of the means, issue position extremity scores are plotted on a separate vertical axis from the behavioral polarization scores, so that they may be more easily compared. The total range of both axes, however, is kept constant within each sub-figure.

Contrary to the hypothesis that issue position polarization has remained constant in recent years, Figure 5.2 suggests that issue position extremity has, in fact, increased

very slightly since 1982. Between 1982 and 2004, issue position polarization has increased by about 3 percent of the total range of issue position polarization, a significant change.

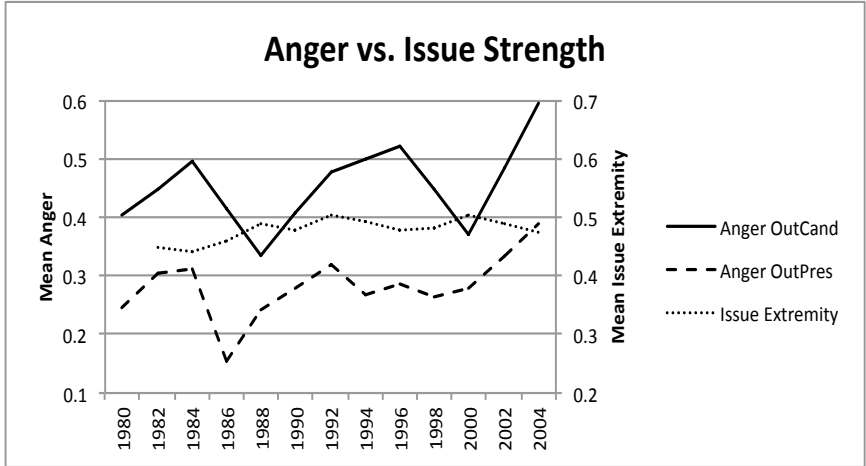
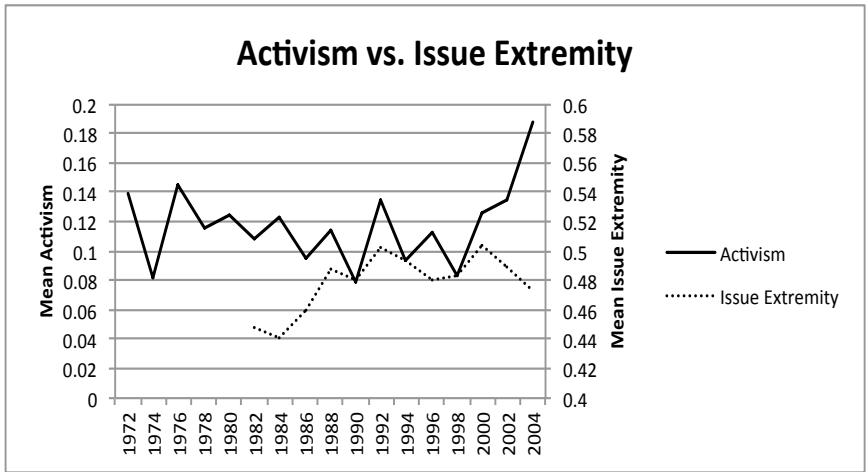
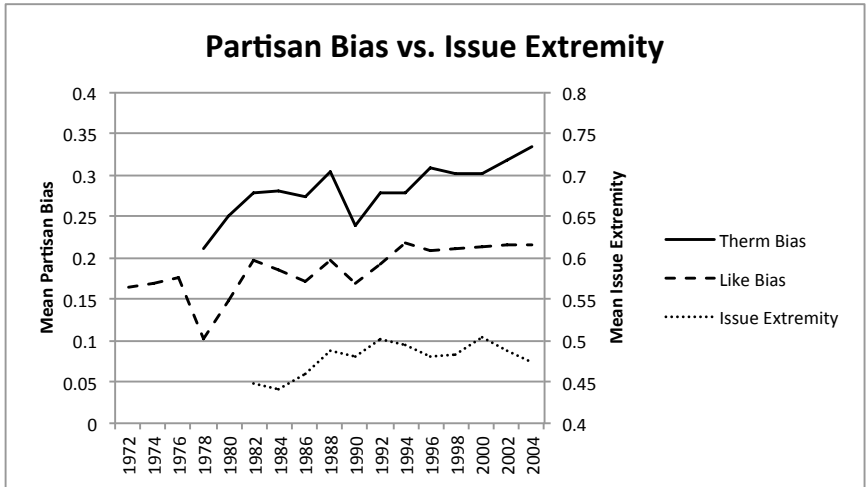
However, the changes in behavioral polarization are markedly greater. The first sub-figure of Figure 5.2 demonstrates a relatively steady increase in both types of partisan bias over time. Between 1978 and 2004, thermometer bias increased by about 12 percent of the total range of bias, and like bias increased by about 11 percent of the total range of bias. These are significantly greater increases than the 3 percent increase in issue position extremity. Thus, while people are becoming increasingly biased in their evaluations of the two parties, this does not appear to be related to a concurrent increase in the intensity of their held issue positions. In fact, while very small increases occur in issue position extremity, the population as a whole finds disproportionately powerful motivations to like their own party more than their opponent party. A slightly more extreme set of issue positions is not enough to explain these increasing levels of partisan bias.

Similarly, trends in activism are not matched to trends in issue position extremity. Mean levels of activism increased by about 5 percent of the total range of activism between 1972 and 2004, and by 8 percent between 1982 and 2004 (the same period of comparison as the 3 percent issue extremity increase). Also, the two trends appear to diverge dramatically at multiple points. Particularly notable are the trends between 2000 and 2004, when issue position extremity dropped while levels of activism underwent a larger increase than at any other time in the series. The overall trend in activism since 1998 has been a steadily increasing level of political activism in the electorate,

doubling the total level of activism in the electorate in those six years. Issue position extremity not only is incapable of explaining this increase, if anything it should be working against the surge in activism, with issue positions becoming more moderate in the same period of time. Therefore, even as issue positions on average became weaker, increasing numbers of people became increasingly involved in political action.

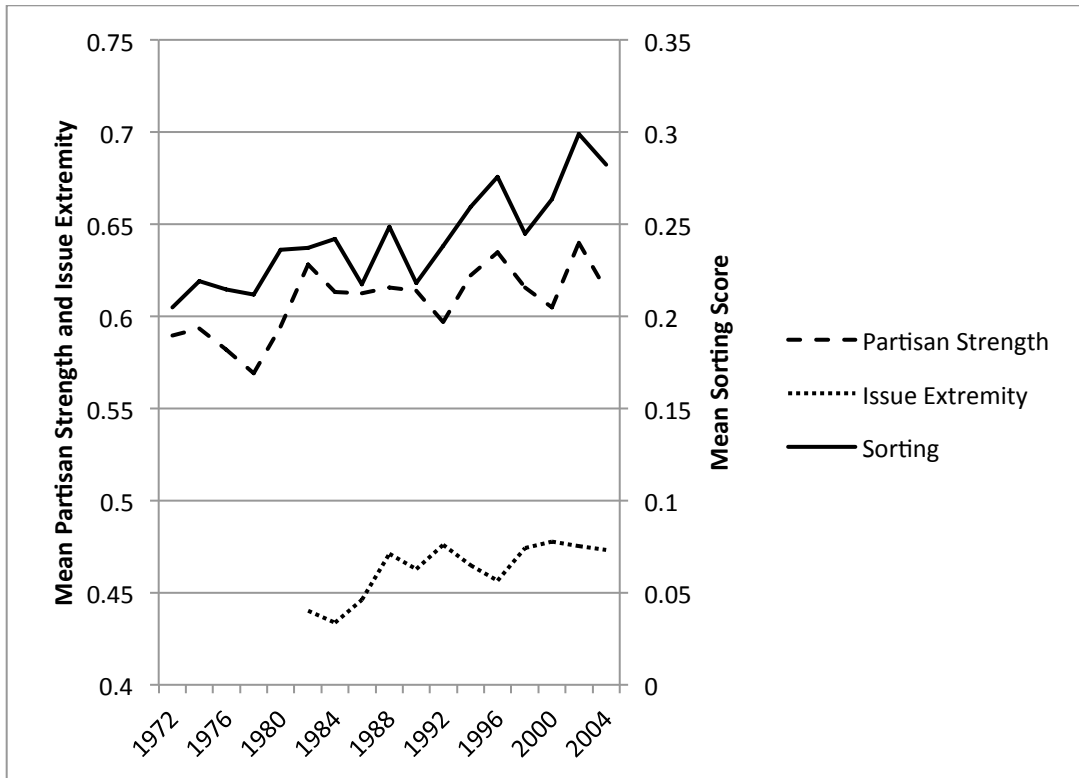
Finally, levels of anger at the outgroup candidate or president are not only far more volatile than levels of issue position extremity (which is to be expected), but both measures of anger undergo an overall increase over time that is quite large. Between 1980 and 2004, anger at the outgroup candidate increased by nearly 20 percent, and anger at the outgroup president increased by nearly 15 percent. There is obviously a “Bush effect” here that explains most of the recent increases, but it is notable that during the same years when anger toward Bush increases by more than 20 percent, average issue position extremity declines. According to the Fiorina view of polarization, the nation during those years is becoming less polarized, and yet 20 percent more citizens report feeling angry at the president.

Figure 5.2. Behavioral Polarization vs. Issue Position Polarization (Extremity) Over Time



The time trends also offer a potential explanation for the motivation behind the increases in behavioral polarization. According to the theory behind this project, these increases in behavioral polarization should be driven by increasing levels of partisan identity strength and, particularly, sorting. These relationships will be examined more extensively in the following chapters, but as an introductory look at the potential sources behind the significant increases in behavioral polarization, Figure 5.3 examines levels of issue extremity compared against levels of partisan identity strength and sorting over time. Due to differences in magnitude, the sorting score is plotted on a secondary axis for ease of comparison.

Figure 5.3. Partisan identity, Issue Extremity and Sorting Over Time



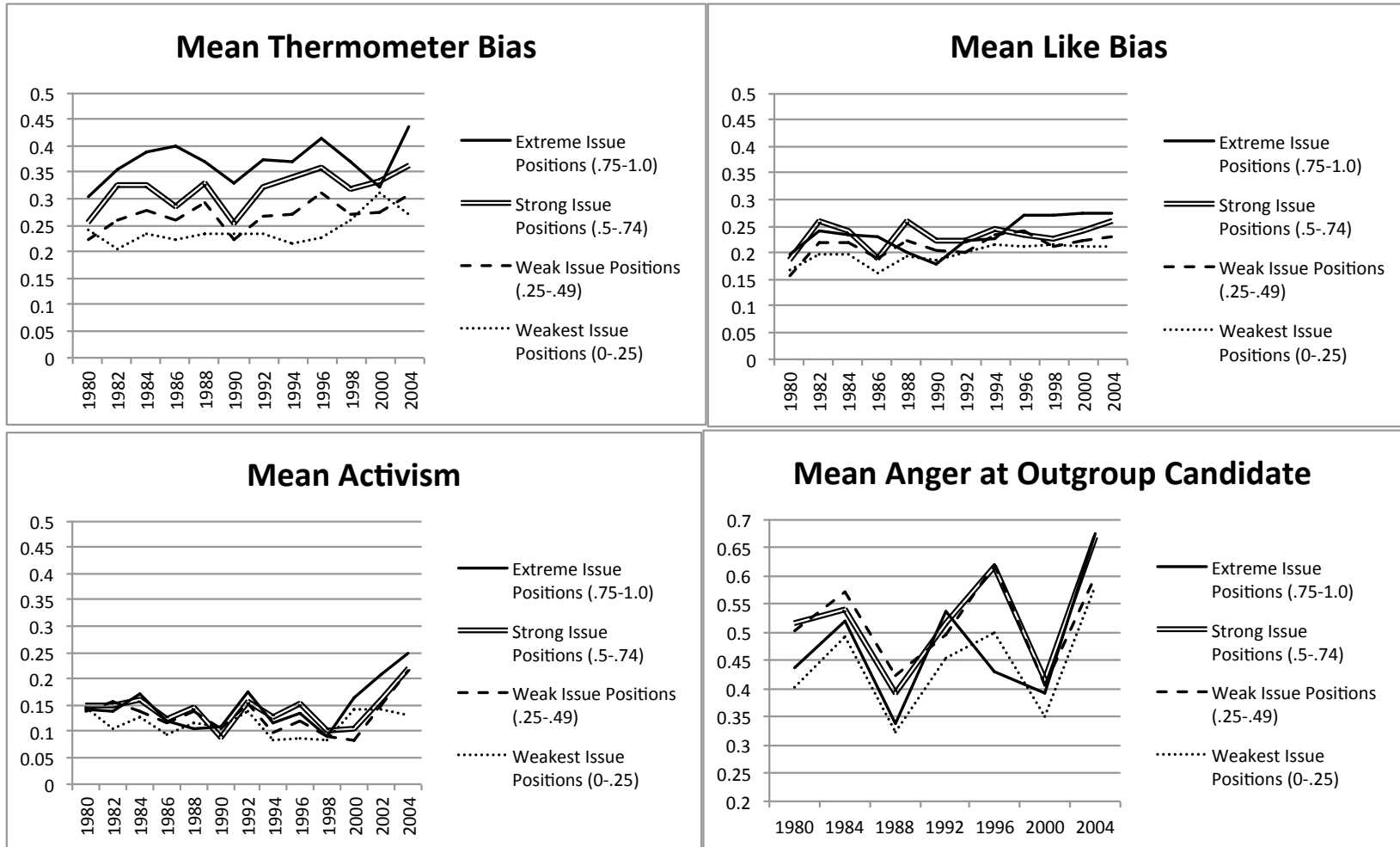
One thing that stands out from Figure 5.3 is that issue extremity and partisan strength have both undergone relatively moderate increases since 1972. As mentioned above, issue extremity increases by 3 percent between 1982 and 2004. Over the full range of time, average partisan strength also increases by about 3 percent of the total range of partisan strength. More importantly, however, over the same period of time, partisan-ideological sorting increases by 8 percent. Thus, as all four measures of behavioral polarization are undergoing significant increases, with Americans growing increasingly biased against the other party, active to defeat the other party, and angry at their outgroup's presidential candidate, issue positions and average partisan strength are increasing only to a small degree. The variable that appears to increase in line with behavioral polarization, and not issue extremity, is the measure of partisan-ideological sorting. This relationship will be much more thoroughly examined in Chapter 6, but for the purposes of this chapter it is important to note that while issue position extremity is not capable of explaining the increases in behavioral polarization, the trends in sorting may be capable of doing so.

Conditional Means

The results above suggest that issue position extremity and behavioral polarization are separate phenomena. This is an important distinction because it runs counter to an understanding of politics as driven by issues and issue attitudes. In fact, if issue position extremity has little to do with partisan bias, activism or anger, this is, in itself, an interesting result. While people may proclaim that they are angry or active because they feel so strongly about issues, it appears that this is not necessarily entirely true. Similarly, while people may argue that they evaluate the parties differently because

of their stands on the issues, these results suggest that this bias is not entirely related to issue position intensity. In an alternate approach to examining the relationship between the two types of polarization, Figure 5.4 examines mean levels of the four types of behavioral polarization at four levels of issue position polarization using the cumulative ANES data file. The scale on each sub-figure uses a total range of 0.5 units for ease of comparison, though the final figure is shifted up by 0.2 units, due to differences in the mean values. Each of the four lines in each figure represents a different level of issue position extremity, by 25 percent increments.

Figure 5.4. Mean Behavioral Polarization by Issue Position Extremity



The patterns observed in Figure 5.4 suggest that, in fact, issue position polarization cannot provide much information about behavioral polarization. In the first sub-figure of Figure 5.4, mean levels of thermometer bias (the element of behavioral polarization that offered the strongest correlation with issue position polarization) are shown to be marginally affected by issue position extremity. Throughout most of the thermometer bias series, those with the weakest issue positions tend to display the lowest levels of bias, while those with the most extreme issue positions tend to display the highest levels of bias, and these differences are significant in every year except 2000. The magnitude of the difference rises and falls, but the average difference over the entire range is about 13 percent of the total range of bias. If feelings of warmth toward the parties are driven largely by concerns about issues, one would expect to see those with the weakest issue positions feeling little to no thermometer bias, while those with the most extreme issue positions would likely demonstrate higher thermometer bias than is observed here, never reaching more than the midpoint of the bias scale in this data range. Clearly, differences in an individual's feelings about the two parties are not entirely driven by the extremity of a person's issue positions. Issue position extremity, though somewhat related to thermometer bias, is not the only contributor.

Other measures of behavioral polarization are even less strongly related to issue position polarization. When examining like bias, weak issue positions do appear to correspond to slightly lower levels of like bias, but until 2004 all other levels of issue position extremity are virtually indistinguishable in the level of like bias they inspire. They are also often in inconsistent order, with extreme issue positions corresponding to lower levels of bias than less extreme issue positions. Furthermore, the difference

between the mean levels of like bias among those with the weakest and the most extreme issue positions is only significant in years 1986, 1998, 2000 and 2004. The rest of the series shows no significant difference in levels of like bias between those with the weakest and those with the most extreme issue positions. Again, a larger number of reasons for liking for one party over the other does not appear to strongly correspond to the extremity of a person's issue positions. Like bias and issue extremity are separate phenomena.

Activism also shows little relationship with issue position extremity. The difference between the mean level of activism among those with the weakest and the most extreme issue positions is non-significant in every year but 2004. And even in 2004, the difference between the most moderate and the most extreme issue position holders is less than 12 percent of the total range of activism. Furthermore, this difference arises only because those with the weakest issue positions do not become more active between 2000 and 2004, while all other levels of issue position extremity move together toward greater activism. In 2004, the difference in activism between those with weak and weakest issue positions is nearly as large as the difference between those with strong issue positions and weakest issue positions. Contrary to what many partisans suggest, stronger issue positions do not reliably correspond to higher levels of activism.

Even anger does not appear to be directly linked to extremity of issue positions. Professed anger at the outgroup candidate did not differ significantly between those with weak and extreme issue positions in any year. In 1996, those with weak (not weakest) issue positions were *more* angry than those with extreme issue positions. The intensity

of our held issue positions are therefore not very helpful in understanding the sources of partisan anger, suggesting that these two are also separate phenomena.

All four of these types of behavioral polarization, therefore, are not explained well by differences in issue position extremity. Those with the most extreme issue positions are not much more biased, active or angry than those with very moderate issue positions. Thus, even people who are not issue-polarized can be just as behaviorally-polarized as those who are highly issue-polarized. In fact, if the Fiorina approach to polarization were considered, these results could even be expected show that those with the most moderate issue positions should be the most active and angry, due to their disconnect from their parties, their perception of the extremity of the other party, and their desire to construct a more moderate political environment. This is also not the case.

Furthermore, the lack of differentiation between the levels of behavioral polarization of those at high and low issue polarization suggests that even in the moderate middle that the Fiorina camp uses as a reflection of a cohesive electorate, political behavior is not much less polarized than the behavior that is seen among the most issue polarized Americans. Those citizens that hold generally moderate issue positions are nearly as behaviorally polarized as those who hold radically extreme political opinions. The great well of issue moderation does not appear to prevent a deepening behavioral and emotional rift between partisans. Issue position extremity therefore cannot be said to be the main motivating factor behind partisan bias, activism and anger. It is thus useful to examine them as separate constructs.

Factor Analysis

As a final examination of the separateness of behavioral and issue position polarization, I include the component items of each type of polarization in a principal components factor analysis for each presidential election year, beginning in 1984, as the government spending item is not available in 1980. This factor analysis should accomplish three important tasks. First, it should establish that the elements of partisan identity and behavioral polarization are a separate construct from the elements of issue position polarization. Second, by including each issue item individually, it should address the potential criticism that some issues are simply more linked to behavior than others, and that by aggregating all six issues these analyses may be hiding the true power of one or more issues that are particularly powerful in motivating behavior. Third, by examining these relationships by year, it should demonstrate whether these relationships are stable or changing over time.

Principal components analysis attempts to explain all of the variance in a model. It is simply a mathematical tool for reducing large numbers of indicators to a smaller set of components that account for the maximum amount of variance. Principal components analysis locates the first component so that it explains the largest possible variance. Each subsequent factor is located so that it explains the largest possible portion of the remaining variance, each factor being orthogonal to the previous ones. In the first step of the factor analysis, polychoric correlations between partisan identity strength, the four measures of behavioral polarization and the six elements of issue polarization are obtained. Polychoric correlations are used in order to potentially reduce the effect of statistical artifacts in affecting the grouping of the items into factors. In the next step, a

principal components factor analysis is run on the correlation matrix, producing the eigenvalues of the correlation matrix, the factor loadings and the uniqueness of the variables. Finally, an oblique (oblimin) rotation of the loading matrix is performed, as there is certainly a correlation between the factors. The resulting rotated factor loadings are reported as the final factor loadings.

The results of the principal components analysis are presented in Table 5.2a by year. Only the first four factors are shown, for the sake of space. Each factor with an eigenvalue greater than 1 can be considered a separate factor, suggesting three or, in 2000, four factors. An examination of these third and fourth factors, however, reveal that they are theoretically unsupported, as is further explained below. Thus, in the two-factor solution, the first factor explains between 21 and 26 percent of the total variance and the second factor explains between 16 and 18 percent of the total variance, depending on the year. The two factors therefore appear to have a relatively stable level of explanatory power over time.

Table 5.2a. Principal Components Analysis Eigenvalues, by year

	Eigenvalue	Proportion of Variance
1984		
Factor1	2.57	0.23
Factor2	1.81	0.16
Factor3	1.02	0.09
Factor4	0.99	0.09
1988		
Factor1	2.31	0.21
Factor2	1.88	0.17
Factor3	1.11	0.10
Factor4	0.93	0.09
1992		
Factor1	2.56	0.23
Factor2	1.71	0.16
Factor3	1.14	0.10
Factor4	0.93	0.08
1996		
Factor1	2.81	0.26
Factor2	1.73	0.16
Factor3	1.18	0.11
Factor4	0.94	0.09
2000		
Factor1	2.50	0.23
Factor2	1.72	0.16
Factor3	1.19	0.11
Factor4	1.06	0.10
2004		
Factor1	2.90	0.26
Factor2	1.97	0.18
Factor3	1.03	0.09
Factor4	0.92	0.08

Table 5.2b. Principal Components Analysis Factor Loadings – Oblique rotation (loadings greater than .30 shaded), by year, including correlation between the two factors

1984	Factor1	Factor2
Partisan Strength	0.71	0.02
Like Bias	0.75	0.00
Thermometer Bias	0.75	0.16
Activism	0.56	-0.08
Anger at Candidate	0.71	-0.14
Abortion Extremity	-0.03	0.02
Government Spending Extremity	-0.01	0.74
Health Care Extremity	0.02	0.56
Aid to Blacks Extremity	-0.04	0.62
Defense Spending Extremity	0.02	0.42
Government Jobs Extremity	0.08	0.65
Correlation between factors	0.11	
1988	Factor1	Factor2
Partisan Strength	0.68	0.00
Like Bias	0.62	-0.01
Thermometer Bias	0.73	0.14
Activism	0.52	-0.08
Anger at Candidate	0.68	-0.10
Abortion Extremity	0.00	-0.11
Government Spending Extremity	0.04	0.58
Health Care Extremity	-0.03	0.64
Aid to Blacks Extremity	0.00	0.69
Defense Spending Extremity	-0.01	0.50
Government Jobs Extremity	0.04	0.74
Correlation between factors	0.10	
1992	Factor1	Factor2
Partisan Strength	0.73	0.06
Like Bias	0.71	-0.13
Thermometer Bias	0.78	0.13
Activism	0.49	-0.07
Anger at Candidate	0.74	-0.07
Abortion Extremity	0.00	-0.05
Government Spending Extremity	0.16	0.57
Health Care Extremity	-0.01	0.57
Aid to Blacks Extremity	-0.02	0.73
Defense Spending Extremity	0.03	0.10
Government Jobs Extremity	-0.04	0.73
Correlation between factors	0.10	

1996	Factor1	Factor2
Partisan Strength	0.06	0.69
Like Bias	-0.13	0.74
Thermometer Bias	0.24	0.68
Activism	0.19	0.27
Anger at Candidate	-0.10	0.58
Abortion Extremity	0.01	0.09
Government Spending Extremity	0.58	0.16
Health Care Extremity	0.51	0.25
Aid to Blacks Extremity	0.78	-0.09
Defense Spending Extremity	0.56	-0.16
Government Jobs Extremity	0.76	0.05

Correlation between factors 0.15

2000	Factor1	Factor2
Partisan Strength	0.70	0.03
Like Bias	0.70	-0.10
Thermometer Bias	0.80	0.08
Activism	0.12	0.20
Anger at Candidate	0.63	-0.11
Abortion Extremity	0.02	-0.09
Government Spending Extremity	0.10	0.37
Health Care Extremity	0.03	0.49
Aid to Blacks Extremity	0.00	0.86
Defense Spending Extremity	0.22	0.15
Government Jobs Extremity	-0.02	0.83

Correlation between factors 0.16

2004	Factor1	Factor2
Partisan Strength	0.76	0.00
Like Bias	0.69	0.02
Thermometer Bias	0.79	0.09
Activism	0.56	0.02
Anger at Candidate	0.71	-0.13
Abortion Extremity	0.00	0.00
Government Spending Extremity	0.11	0.62
Health Care Extremity	-0.04	0.71
Aid to Blacks Extremity	0.08	0.73
Defense Spending Extremity	0.08	0.36
Government Jobs Extremity	-0.07	0.81

Correlation between factors 0.13

Table 5.2b shows the results of the factor loadings for the two factor principal components analysis, with oblimin rotation (the factor loadings above .3 are shaded) for each presidential election year. The first factor in all years except 1996 is the behavioral polarization factor, explaining the largest portion of the variance in the model. With the exception of activism in 1996 and 2000, the four elements of behavioral polarization and partisan identity all load strongly on one factor, and on no other factor. In 1996 and 2000, activism does not load on any factor. The second factor (again, except in 1996) is an issue position polarization factor¹⁴. Four of the six elements of issue position polarization load strongly on this factor in every year. Defense spending does not load on either factor in 2000 or in 1992 but does load on the issue polarization factor in all other years¹⁵. Abortion is not associated with either factor in any year. This is almost certainly simply a measurement artifact related to the response options of the various issue items. The five items that load on Factor 2 share seven-point response sets, while abortion, which consistently loads strongly on Factor 3 (not shown) offers only a four-point response set. However, despite this measurement artifact, the factor structure supports the original theory that separates behavioral and issue polarization. The behavioral polarization measures generally load neatly together on one factor, while the issue position measures load on another factor.

¹⁴ It is unclear why the issue and behavioral factors switch places in 1996. Technically, it is because the issue factor in that year explained a greater portion of the variance than the behavioral factor. Why this would occur only in this year is a matter for further study.

¹⁵ In 2000, defense spending loads on a fourth factor with government spending, although government spending loads more strongly on the issue polarization factor (the third factor is the abortion item). In 1992, defense spending loads on a third factor with abortion. These third and fourth factors are not theoretically justified or relevant to the current study, and are therefore not included here.

Furthermore, Table 5.2b includes the correlation between the two factors in every year. These correlations are consistently weak. They range from a low of .10 in 1988 and 1992 to a high of .16 in 2000. While it could be speculated that this correlation is increasing over time (although the 2004 correlation comes back down to .13), even at the highest level of correlation these two factors are not strongly related. The elements of behavioral polarization are not only a separate factor from the elements of issue polarization, these two factors are also only weakly related to each other, and this is true across time. Issue positions and political behavior can be understood to be separate constructs.

The results of this factor analysis not only demonstrate the separateness of issue positions and political behavior and emotion, but they also address the possibility that some issues may be more strongly associated with behavior, depending on the political environment. This does not appear to be the case. While some issues such as defense spending and abortion were occasionally or permanently unassociated with the other issues, no issue ever loaded on the political behavior and emotion factor. Thus, even in years when some issues may have been more salient or provocative, they were not related to the bias, activism and anger that were linked to partisan identity. This suggests that aggregating all six issues into an index of issue position extremity is not masking the potential effects of single issues on behavior.

These results lend final support to the idea that behavioral polarization and issue position polarization are separate constructs. Taken together, the results presented here suggest that partisan strength, partisan bias, activism and anger are related measures, and

move together. Issue position polarization, far from driving these types of polarized behavior, doesn't appear to be part of the same phenomenon.

Conclusions

The results presented here facilitate a clearer understanding of polarization in the American electorate. Behavioral polarization and issue position polarization are separable and distinct phenomena. This distinction suggests that it is possible for the American public to grow increasingly biased, active and angry without a corresponding polarization of their issue positions. Issue position polarization is not tightly tied to these behavioral elements of polarization, and thus can move independently of these behaviors and emotions. Issue polarization and behavioral polarization are only very weakly correlated and were shown to form two separate factors in a factor analysis, and this was true in every presidential election year. Furthermore, issue position extremity is not very good at identifying which citizens are the most biased, active and angry. These results lend strong evidence to a new conception of polarization as made up of two separate constructs.

This divided concept of polarization relies on an understanding of partisan behavior and issue attitudes as somewhat unconnected political characteristics. Weak issue attitudes do not necessarily imply low levels of partisanship, bias, activism or anger. Issue positions do not always drive political behavior, and they are not the only forces to do so. It is thus useful to understand that any agreement on issues in the electorate does not preclude high levels of bias, activism and anger. It should not be suggested that we are not polarized when we are simply not polarized on issues. This argument ignores a separate, and equally valid, measure of polarization.

Having established the relative independence of behavioral and issue polarization, the following two chapters examine the power of political identity sorting to affect behavioral polarization even when issue positions are held constant. Chapter 6 will assess whether it is possible for behavioral polarization to be intensified by the effects of sorting when issue positions are unchanging, using ANES data from 1972 to 2004. Chapter 7 will examine the same question, using more recent data and better measures of identity, collected in November of 2011. Chapter 8 will then examine the relative effects of sorting on behavioral and issue polarization, in order to determine whether sorting has been capable of increasing behavioral polarization to a greater extent than it has increased issue polarization.

Chapter 6- The Effects of Partisan-Ideological Sorting on Behavioral Polarization

One major goal of this project is to establish that political identity sorting is capable of increasing behavioral polarization, even when issue positions are unchanging. This chapter examines the effects of only the narrowest definition of sorting, between partisan and ideological identity. The measure of sorting used here, as described in Chapter 4, takes into account the objective alignment of party and ideology (i.e. whether a strong Democrat is also a strong liberal in the case of a highly sorted individual; or whether a strong Democrat is also a strong conservative in the case of a highly unsorted individual), as well as the respondent's strength of identification with both party and ideology. This is done under the reasoning that a person can only have a sorted set of identities if they feel attached to both a party and an ideology. The degree of attachment to a group, as described in Chapter 3, is an essential element of the effect of identity and identity alignment on behavior. The gradations of the sorting score along with the number of respondents in each category are listed in Appendix 4.1, and range from a zero value that represents respondents totally unaffiliated with party or ideology, through low values that represent respondents whose party and ideology are in conflict to varying degrees, to higher values that represent respondents whose party and ideology are correctly matched, but only weakly ascribed to, to the highest value that represents highly committed members of a correctly matched party and ideology.

Using the cumulative ANES data file, this chapter examines the hypothesis that partisan-ideological sorting increases political bias, activism and anger on an individual level, both via partisan strength and independently of partisan strength, even when issue

positions are moderate. If supported, this hypothesis will help to establish that even if the nation is not substantially polarizing according to the Fiorina camp's definition of a bimodal distribution of issue positions, it is still possible for a nation of moderately opinionated citizens to grow increasingly biased against each other, more active to defeat each other, and more easily angered by political opponents, simply because their partisan and ideological identities have moved into correct and strengthening alignment, causing them to view their opponents as increasingly different from them.

The ANES data file allows for a broad assessment of the effects of sorting over time and over a representative sample of the American population. It does not, however, include social identity-based measures of partisanship or ideology, which have been shown in prior work to outperform the 7-point measures available in the ANES data (Mason, Huddy and Aaroe, 2010). As the degree of identity attachment is the key to behavioral effects, this more limited measure of attachment should provide more limited results on behavior. The following results are therefore likely a conservative estimate of the effects of identity sorting on behavioral polarization.

Recent Trends

In order to understand increases in behavioral polarization, it is important to understand recent trends in political identity strength and alignment. As a different view of the trends mentioned in Chapter 5, Figure 6.1 demonstrates that partisan identity strength has been increasing during recent decades. The percentage of people calling themselves strong partisans has increased by over 11 percent between 1972 and 2004 (though most of this increase occurred between 1978 and 1982), while the mean sorting score has increased by nearly 8 percent of the total range of sorting, (with most of the

increase occurring more recently, between 1990 and 2004). At the same time, the percentage of pure Independents has decreased by more than 4 percent. Between 1982 and 2004 (the time period for which the full issue extremity scale is available), the percentage of people calling themselves strong partisans increased by about 3 percent, while the mean sorting score increased by nearly 5 percent and the percentage of Independents decreased by 2 percent.

At the same time, as shown in Figure 6.2, issue positions have polarized somewhat. Between 1982 and 2004, issue position extremity increased by about 3 percent of the total range of issue position extremity, though most of that change happened between 1982 and 1988. Between 1988 and 2004, average issue position extremity did not increase significantly, while the percentage of strong partisans and the average sorting score increased by 2 and 3 percent, respectively. Issue position constraint, or the consistency of positions across the six issues, has not significantly increased between 1982 and 2004¹⁶. In general, partisan strength and sorting tend to follow a similar, increasing trajectory over time, with issue position extremity and constraint following a more static pattern. While American issue positions are becoming slightly more extreme, American citizens are becoming even more partisan and sorted.

¹⁶ As the issue extremity measure is not only empirically a stricter test of issue polarization and also a more appropriate measure of the Fiorina camp's definition of the polarization of issue positions, the subsequent analyses will examine only issue position extremity. All models in the chapter were replicated with issue constraint and it performed more weakly than issue extremity in every case.

Figure 6.1. Partisan Strength and Sorting, 1972-2004

(0-1 scale)

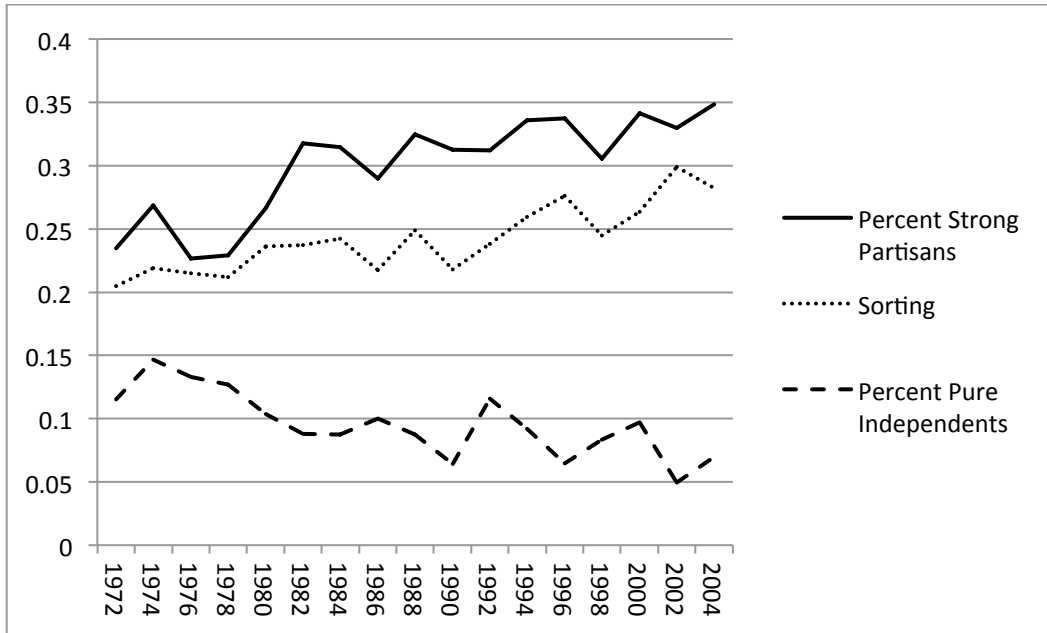
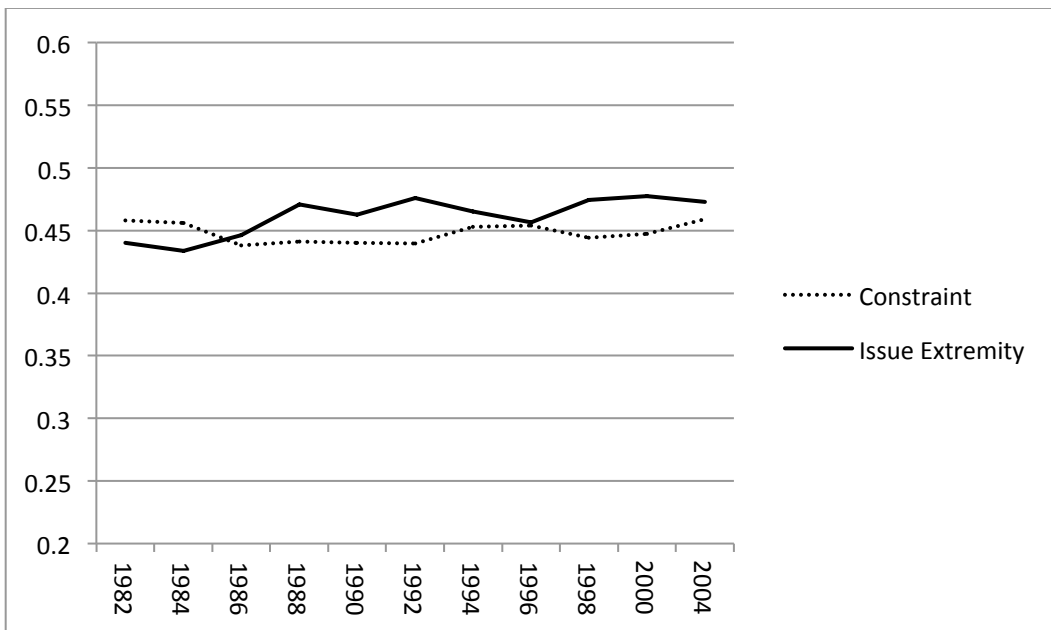


Figure 6.2. Mean Issue Extremity and Constraint, 1982-2004 (0-1 scale)



In the cumulative ANES file, the pairwise correlation between simple partisan-ideological identity alignment¹⁷ and partisan strength is .39, while the correlation between sorting and issue extremity is .12 and the correlation between sorting and issue constraint is .07¹⁸. These initial results suggest that sorting and partisan strength can potentially move without equivalent changes in the extremity or constraint of held issue positions. It can certainly be said that increases in issue extremity are only vaguely related to increasing levels of partisan-ideological sorting. Thus, even as party and ideology fall increasingly into alignment, this phenomenon does not powerfully draw issue positions along with it, into increasingly extreme positions.

Sorting, Identity and Behavioral Polarization

In the following analyses, the causal effects of sorting and identity on behavioral polarization are examined first, holding issue extremity constant in order to demonstrate the ability of sorting and identity to affect behavioral polarization without the involvement of issue position polarization. These relationships are examined in three steps. First, the four measures of behavioral polarization are regressed on sorting and partisan and ideological identities, holding issue extremity constant, and in separate models so as not to confuse the interpretation of entangled measures. This should demonstrate that even if issue positions are not polarizing, the power of partisan identity and sorting are capable of driving increasing levels of bias, activism and anger in the electorate. Second, in order to clarify the differential effects of partisan identity and

¹⁷ The full sorting score including identity strength is not used for this calculation, as partisan strength is a component of the full sorting score.

¹⁸ The simple objective partisan-ideological identity alignment score is correlated with issue extremity at -.02 and with issue constraint at .07.

sorting, predicted values of behavioral polarization are examined at low and high levels of sorting, keeping partisan identity at its maximum and holding issue extremity at its mean. Third, a matching procedure is used to examine the effects of increases in sorting on behavioral polarization when respondents are exact matched on either party or ideology and all the demographic and issue extremity covariates. In this analysis, identical individuals are compared, varying only their levels of sorting, demonstrating that a sorted set of party and ideological identities can cause citizens to be biased, active and angry, even when they are identical in every other way, including in their political opinions.

Regressions

It is expected that partisan-ideological sorting will increase behavioral polarization via partisan strength and on its own, independent of the extremity of issue positions. First, the effects of sorting and identity on behavioral polarization are observed individually in the pooled cumulative ANES file, controlling for issue position extremity and other relevant demographic factors. In all models, standard errors are clustered by year.

Table 6.1 examines the determinants of the four measures of behavioral polarization – thermometer bias, like bias, activism and anger. In the first column of Table 6.1, the effect of sorting on thermometer bias is large and significant. Moving from least sorted to most sorted increases thermometer bias by about 43 percent of the total range of bias, even when issue position extremity is held constant. To put this in more real terms, predicted values provide a better explanation. A person who adheres to neither party or ideology, holding all other variables at their mean, reports a 17 point difference

(out of 100) between their feelings of warmth toward the two parties, a person who holds very strong and conflicting partisan and ideological identities reports a 21 point difference, and a person who holds very strong and totally aligned partisan and ideological identities reports a 60 point difference in their feelings of warmth between the two parties. This 60-point difference occurs even when issue positions are held at their mean. Furthermore, the effect of sorting on thermometer bias is nearly four times larger than the effect of issue extremity on thermometer bias. A person who holds the most moderate issue positions on all six issues, holding all other variables at their mean, reports a 23 point difference in their feelings between the parties, while a person who holds the most extreme positions on all six issues reports a 34 point difference in their feelings of warmth toward the two parties. A sorted identity is by far the strongest influence on individuals' relative feelings of warmth toward the two parties.

The coefficients related to partisan and ideological strength in the second column are also large and significant. An increase from weakest to strongest partisan identity (holding all else constant, including ideological identity and issue extremity) increases thermometer bias by about 33 percent of the total range of bias. In predicted values, a pure Independent feels a 7-point difference between the two parties, while a strong partisan feels a 40-point difference, holding all else constant. An increase from weakest to strongest ideological identity (holding party, issues and all else constant) increases thermometer bias by about 13 percent of the total range of bias. A pure moderate thus feels a 23 point difference between the two parties, while an extreme liberal or conservative feels a 36 point difference between the two parties, holding all else constant.

Thus sorting and the two measures of political identity are all powerfully capable, on their own, of motivating large increases in bias in a respondent's feelings toward the two parties, though a fully sorted identity predicts by far the largest amount of bias. These effects are notably resilient to the effect of issue position extremity. Sorting and political identity affect partisan bias even when issue position extremity is held constant. It is thus possible for citizens to feel increasingly disparate levels of warmth toward the two parties even when their issue positions do not change. There is an outside force working on citizens' feelings toward the two parties, apart from their issue positions. This force is a psychological inclination to feel more warmly toward one party, due primarily to a strong identification with the correct combination of party and ideology.

Table 6.1. Effects of Sorting, Partisan Strength and Issue Position Extremity on Behavioral Polarization

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

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

An alternative measure of partisan bias provides similar results. The third and fourth columns of Table 6.1 examine the determinants of like bias, the difference between the parties in the total number of likes and dislikes the respondent could think of for each party. In column 3, an increase from least to most sorted increases like bias by 28 percent of the total range of bias. In predicted values, a person with no partisan or ideological affiliation is predicted to report a like bias score of .14 (out of 1.0), holding all else constant. Similarly, a person with strongly held but conflicting partisan and ideological identities will report a like bias score of .16. However, a person with strongly held and aligned partisan and ideological identities will report a like bias score of .42, holding all else constant, a significantly larger amount of bias.

In column 4, an increase from weakest to strongest partisan identity (holding all else constant, including ideology and issue extremity) increases like bias by 17 percent of the total range of bias. This means that a pure Independent (holding all other variables at their means) is predicted to report a like bias score of .10, while a strong partisan would report a like bias score of .27. Similarly, moving from weakest to strongest ideological identity (holding all else at their means) increases bias by 10 percent of the total range of bias. Thus, a pure moderate would have a like bias score of .17 while an extreme liberal or conservative would report a like bias score of .27. Just as in the case of thermometer bias, the like bias models suggest that bias is strongly motivated by sorting as well as identity strength, with sorting generating a far larger predicted level of bias.

Furthermore, the effects of sorting and identity are robust to the effect of issue position extremity, which is comparatively weak. The difference between the like bias of those who hold the most moderate position on all six issues versus those who hold the most extreme positions on all six issues is .04 out of 1.0 (holding all else, including identity and sorting, constant). What is

fascinating about this particular measure is that it is derived from a list of things that people independently offered as reasons that they liked or disliked each party. From an instrumental view of politics, all of these things should be issue-related. However, the forces that most strongly affect the number of likes and dislikes a person can come up with for each party are the strength and alignment of their partisan and ideological identities, not the extremity of their issue positions. In fact, the effect of sorting on like bias is seven times larger than the effect of issue position extremity. Liking or disliking one party over another appears to be strongly motivated by identity, rather than issues.

Activism, presented in columns 5 and 6 of Table 6.1, is also motivated by sorting and political identities. In column 5, an increase from least to most sorted increases political activism by 17 percent of the total range of activism. The measure of activism is a scale of five political activities, thus a 17 percent increase in activism can be seen as the addition of nearly one new activity due simply to the increase from least to most sorted. A person with no partisan or ideological affiliation is predicted to report a level of activism of .10 (out of 1.0), holding all else constant, participating in less than a single activity. Similarly, a person with strongly held but conflicting partisan and ideological identities will report an activism score of .11. However, a person with strongly held and aligned partisan and ideological identities, holding all else constant, will report an activism score of .27, or involvement in more than one activity, simply from the contribution of sorting, even when their issue positions do not change. In fact, moving from the most moderate position on all six issues to the most extreme issue position on all six issues (holding all else at their means) only increases the activism score by .03.

The effects of partisan and ideological strength on activism are also large and significant in column 6. An increase from weakest to strongest partisan identity (holding all else, including

ideology and issue extremity constant) increases political activism by 10 percent. Thus, a pure Independent is predicted to display an activism score of .08, while a strong partisan has an activism score of .18. An increase from weakest to strongest ideological identity (holding all else constant) increases activism by 6 percent. Thus, a moderate is predicted to display an activism score of .12, while an extreme liberal or conservative will display an activism score of .18. These effects are also robust to the effects of issue extremity, suggesting that even when issue positions are unchanging, political identities are capable of motivating people to become active in politics. When you ask a person why they are participating in an election, many people will list a number of issues that are important to them. These results suggest that, in fact, one major reason they are getting involved is simply that they want their own team to win, and they're willing to take action to preserve or restore their own team's positive status.

Finally, columns 7 and 8 of Table 6.1 examine the effects of sorting and political identity on anger at the outgroup candidate. Those with strong and highly sorted political identities are expected to react with more anger to threats from the outparty. In this dataset, a threat from the outparty is best represented by the candidate running for president against the respondent's own party's candidate¹⁹. A logit model is used to predict whether or not a respondent reported feeling anger toward his/her outparty's presidential candidate. In column 7, sorting significantly increases the likelihood of feeling anger toward the outgroup candidate. The more aligned a respondent's partisan and ideological identities, the more likely they are to feel anger toward the candidate. In column 8, partisan and ideological identity also increase the likelihood of feeling

¹⁹ Though this is not an ideal measure of threat, the outgroup candidate does represent the embodiment of the possibility that the ingroup will lose status. If the outgroup candidate succeeds, the ingroup will have suffered a public failure. Furthermore, the outgroup candidate spends most of his/her time publicly derogating the ingroup candidate and the traits of the ingroup as a whole.

anger. In both models, the effects of sorting and identity are robust to the effects of issue position extremity, which does not have a significant effect on the likelihood of feeling angry at the outgroup candidate.

Though in a logit model the coefficients themselves cannot be interpreted, the predicted probability of a respondent feeling angry can be reported. A person with no partisan or ideological affiliation does not have an outgroup candidate, and thus no probability can be calculated. However, a person with strongly held but conflicting partisan and ideological identities has a 24 percent probability of feeling angry at the presidential candidate from the opposing party, holding all else equal. In contrast, a person with strongly held and aligned partisan and ideological identities has a 58 percent probability of feeling angry at the outgroup candidate. The effect of sorting is to more than double the probability that a person will feel angry, even when their issue positions are unchanging.

Similarly, though a pure Independent does not have an outgroup candidate, an Independent who leans toward one party has a 23 percent probability of feeling angry at the outgroup candidate, while a strong partisan has a 38 percent probability of feeling angry, holding all else equal. A person who identifies as an ideological moderate has a 25 percent probability of feeling angry, while an extreme liberal or conservative has a 38 percent probability of feeling angry, holding all else equal. At the same time, there is no difference in predicted anger between a person who holds the most moderate position on all issues versus a person who holds the most extreme position on all issues. In an instrumental view of politics, a person with more extreme issue positions should feel greater levels of anger at the outgroup candidate, for thwarting the citizen's strongly desired policy outcomes. But once sorting and identity are accounted for, those issue positions do not make people more angry. In general, when we imagine angry

American citizens, we imagine them holding signs, advocating for their most cherished issues, red-faced and yelling. According to these results, it might be more honest if their signs simply read, “my team is better than yours, and don’t you dare say it’s not.”

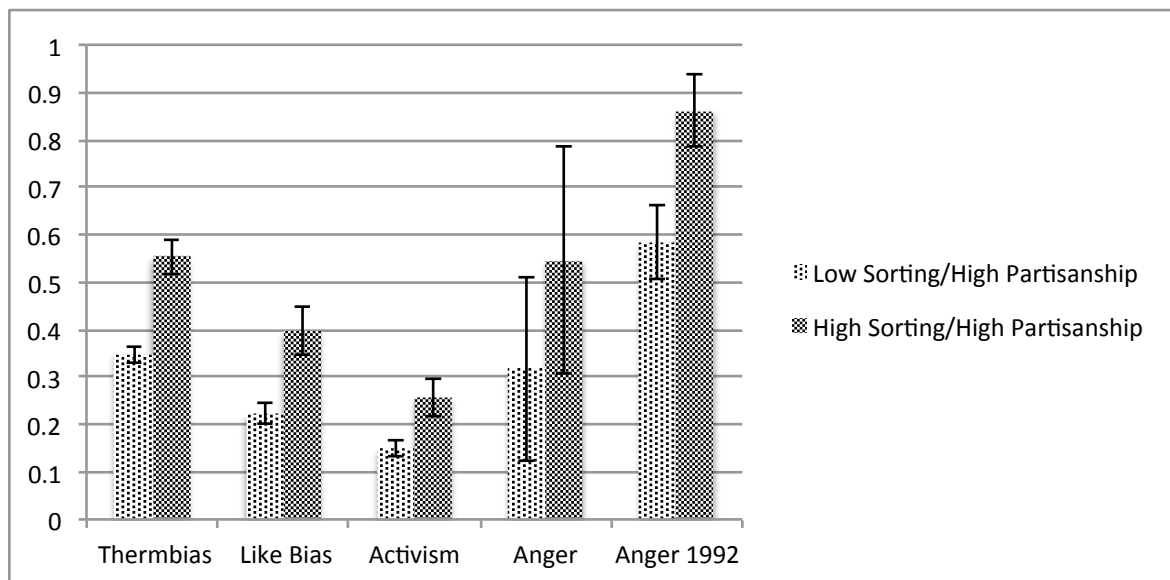
Sorting versus Simple Partisanship

While it is clear that both sorting and partisan and ideological identities have strong effects on behavioral polarization, the *relative* effects of sorting and partisan identity on all four measures of behavioral polarization cannot be disentangled in a simple regression, as the measures are related by construction. In order to better evaluate whether sorting is capable of increasing behavioral polarization beyond the effect of partisan identity, predicted probabilities are presented in Figure 6.3. These values are drawn from regressions similar to those in Table 6.1, but include both sorting and partisan identity and exclude ideological identity for ease of interpretation (see Appendix 6.1 for originating regressions). Partisan identity is constrained to its maximum value, all other variables including issue position extremity are held at their means, and the values of sorting are varied. The low value of sorting reported in Figure 6.3 is not 0 on the sorting scale, in which there are no strong partisans, but the sorting score that includes those with strong and conflicting partisan and ideological identities.

In Figure 6.3, the effect of strong partisanship with an unaligned ideological identity is examined in the low sorting/high partisanship bars. Here, holding issue extremity and all other variables constant, strong partisanship with an unaligned ideological identity generates a thermometer bias score of .35, and a like bias score of .22. However, when strong partisanship is combined with a strong and highly-aligned ideological identity, this ingroup bias score increases to .55 in the case of thermometer bias and .40 in the case of like bias. Partisanship in the absence of a strongly-aligned ideological identity is therefore a far less potent contributor to ingroup bias

than a highly sorted partisan and ideological identity. These results suggest that biases toward one party over another are powerfully driven by the strength and alignment of political identities, even when political issue positions are unchanging. A person with moderate issue positions can still be very biased against the outparty if his/her partisan and ideological identities are strong and aligned, and a well-sorted set of identities will motivate more bias than simply holding a strong partisan attachment.

Figure 6.3. Predicted Values of Behavioral Polarization at Varying Levels of Partisanship and Sorting



Note: 95 percent confidence intervals are shown. Anger models are predicted probabilities. Low sorting represents those with strong but highly conflicted partisan and ideological identities.

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

Finally, the bars labeled Anger present the predicted probability of feeling anger at the outgroup candidate in the full dataset and in 1992 alone. In the full sample, a strong partisan whose ideological identity is weak or unaligned with their partisan identity has a 32 percent likelihood of feeling anger toward the outparty candidate. However, when a strong partisan is well-sorted, with strongly aligned partisan and ideological identities, there is a 55 percent probability that s/he will feel anger toward the outparty candidate, even when holding issue extremity constant. The standard errors are large in the case of anger due to the dependence of the measure on the specific candidate in each year, so for a more precise picture, levels of anger are also examined in only 1992, and there the difference between low and high sorting is more evidently significant. An unsorted partisan has a 58 percent probability of feeling angry, while a

sorted partisan has an 86 percent probability of being angry in 1992²⁰. Sorting, therefore, is capable of driving significant levels of anger, beyond simple partisanship and other demographic variables. Furthermore, this effect is robust to the effect of issue position extremity. A moderate set of issue positions therefore does not prevent the increased anger brought on by the alignment of partisan and ideological identities. As partisan and ideological identities draw into alignment, individuals feel more anger toward their political opponents, even if nothing else changes.

As predicted by social identity theory, a strong partisan identity is capable of motivating bias, activism and anger, but the effects of that identity are significantly strengthened when it is accompanied by a matching strong ideological identity. When partisan and ideological identities are strong and aligned, the effects of social identities on behavior are multiplied. A member of one group will favor that group, and when that group is threatened, that group member will work to defend the group, and feel angry. But when two aligned ingroups are threatened at once, the levels of prejudice against the other party, motivation to defeat them and anger at their leadership grows quickly, as the outgroup begins to appear increasingly foreign.

Matching

The final test of the relationship between sorting and behavioral polarization is to use exact matching to examine the effect of sorting on behavioral polarization, simulating a random assignment of sorting to the population as a treatment condition. This method matches respondents on party or ideology as well as issue extremity and every control variable, creating two groups that are as similar as possible on all covariates. The only difference between the

²⁰ This is true of every presidential election year. 1992 is used as an example simply because it is a year when sorting was in flux and it is thus realistic to discuss strong partisans who are unsorted. In 1992, the difference in predicted anger between sorted and unsorted partisans is .31. The year of the lowest difference was 1984, with a difference of .14. The year of the highest difference was 1996, with a difference of .34. All presidential election years showed a significant difference.

groups is the level of sorting. The sorting score is divided into low and high values by cutting it at approximately the median value. The matched samples are then compared in their levels of behavioral polarization across low and high sorting. Due to the exact matching, a simple difference in means on the matched data can estimate the causal effect. Because a number of the key variables are continuous, coarsened exact matching is used to make the matches more feasible (Iacus, King, Porro and Katz, 2012)²¹. The ANES cumulative data file is used, in order to provide as large a sample as possible for the matching process, with standard errors clustered by year²². Using exact matching on all covariates provides a very conservative test of the effect of sorting on behavior. To find any effect of sorting at all on people who are identical in their education, age, sex, race, location, religiosity, issue positions and partisan or ideological identity is a particularly strict test.

Figures 6.4 and 6.5 present the results of the matching. In Figure 6.4, the samples are matched on ideology, and the extent to which partisan identity is aligned with that ideological identity is varied. For both measures of partisan bias, ideologically identical people (in both identity and issue positions) are significantly more biased in their assessments of the two parties when their partisan identity is strong and in line with their ideological identity. The mean thermometer bias score for a person with an inconsistent partisan identity is .10, while an otherwise identical person with a consistent partisan identity has a mean bias score of .26. In the case of like bias, a person with an inconsistent partisan identity has a mean bias score of .08, while an otherwise identical person with a consistent partisan identity has a bias score of .18.

²¹ The univariate imbalance in means for each covariate is below 0.00001 for all covariates except age, for which the imbalance in means is .04. This indicates that the samples are very well balanced and thus do not require a statistical model to account for any remaining imbalance.

²² Matching on year was not feasible, as the sample size was too severely restricted.

The effect of sorting on activism is smaller, but is in the appropriate direction. The mean level of activism for a person with an inconsistent partisan identity is .10, while a person with a consistent partisan identity has a mean activism score of .13.

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

The results from Figure 6.4 suggest that as partisanship moves into alignment with ideological identity, even when nothing else changes, behavioral polarization increases. People who are identical in their demographics, issue positions and ideological identity become significantly more biased and angry when their party is aligned with their ideology. As the partisan rift falls into line with an ideological rift, average citizens find their partisan opponents increasingly different, unlikeable, worthy of defeat and anger-inducing. Even when these citizens have everything else in common.

Interestingly, this result is weaker when party is held constant and ideological identity is allowed to move, as it is in Figure 6.5. Parties are the more salient groups in political competition because they are the groups that directly compete for power, and throughout this project party identities have been assumed to be the most prominent political identities. Table 6.1 demonstrated that changes in partisan identity strength affected greater increases in

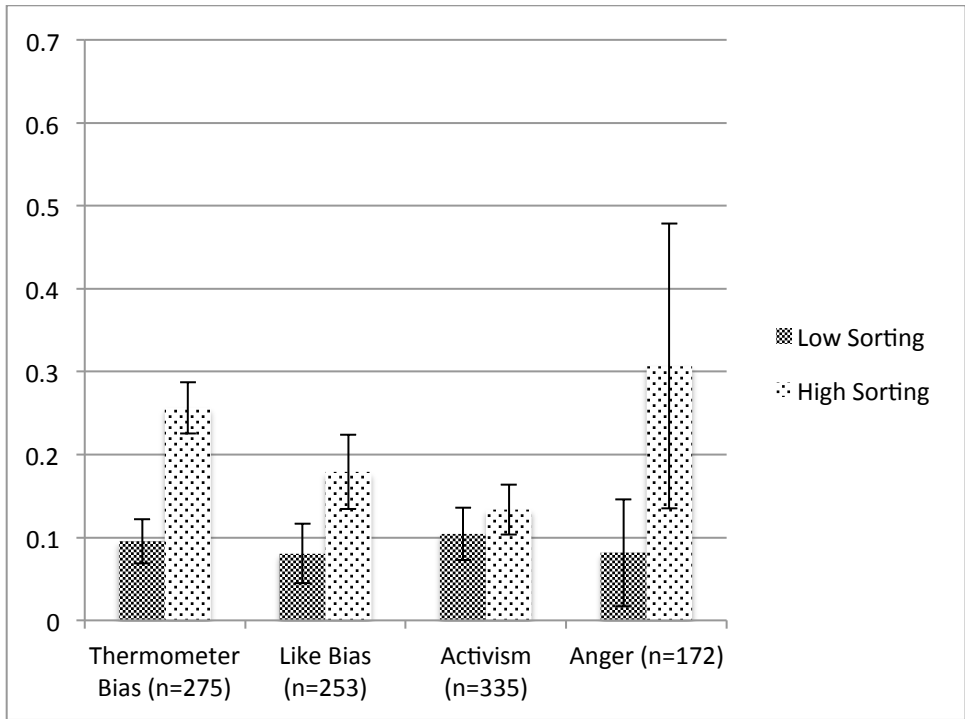
behavioral polarization than changes in ideological identity strength. When party is held constant, a potent source of behavioral polarization is tamped down. However, the effects of sorting are still capable of motivating some increases in behavioral polarization, even when party and issue positions are constrained to be identical across the two samples²³.

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

In the case of activism, the effect of sorting is smaller than in Figure 6.4, but in Figure 6.5 this effect is marginally significant. The mean level of activism for a person with a party-inconsistent ideological identity is .13, while an otherwise identical person with a party-consistent ideological identity has a mean activism score of .15. Just as in Figure 6.4, however, the difference between the two means is very close to the significance threshold.

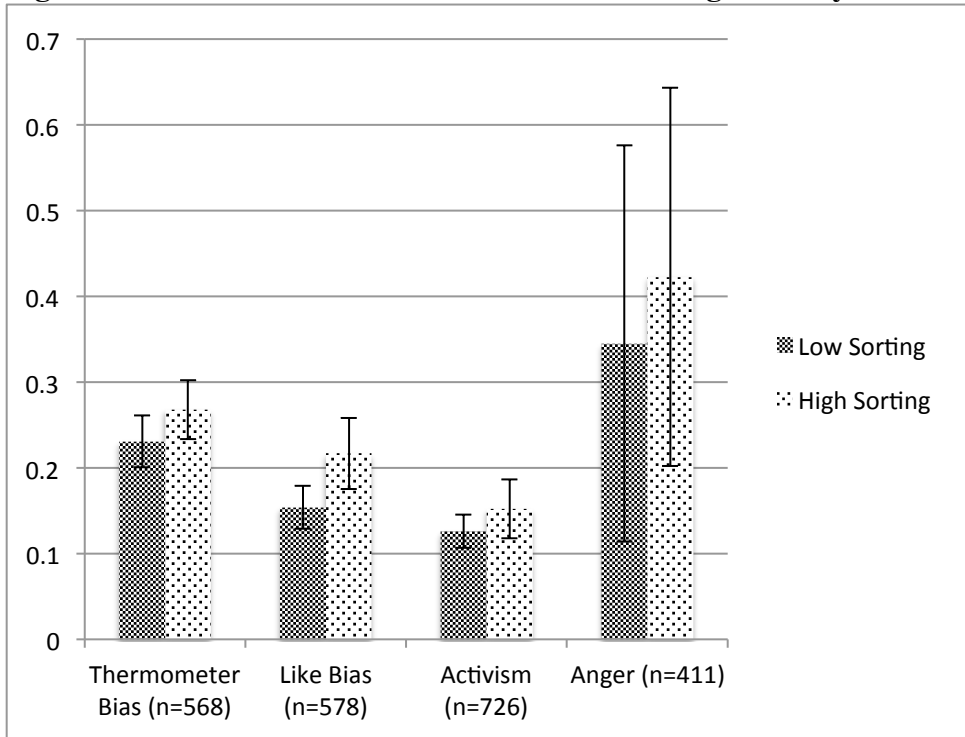
²³ The sample sizes in Figure 6.4 are far smaller than those in Figure 6.5. This is due to the fact that there are more people who are matched on party and the other covariates than people who are matched on ideology and the other covariates.

Figure 6.4. Mean Behavioral Polarization: Matching on Ideology



Note: 95 percent confidence intervals shown.

Figure 6.5. Mean Behavioral Polarization: Matching on Party



Note: 95 percent confidence intervals shown.

Finally, the effect of anger in the party-matched sample is significantly smaller than its effect in the ideology-matched sample. The mean level of anger for a person with a party-inconsistent ideological identity is .34 (a much higher baseline than the ideology-matched sample), while an otherwise identical person with a party-consistent ideological identity has a mean anger score of .42. This is not a significant difference due to the very large standard errors caused by the differences between outgroup presidential candidates.

Figures 6.4 and 6.5 demonstrate three important points. First, echoing the results found in the previous analyses, sorting can increase behavioral polarization even when issue positions become no more extreme. These two types of polarization, behavioral and issue extremity, are capable of moving independently of each other. In fact, the matching process locates people with exactly the same level of issue extremity, and finds that sorting still increases their behavioral polarization. A bimodal distribution of issue opinions is not necessary for the development of an electorate that is deeply and bitterly divided on a behavioral, social and emotional level.

Second, sorting is shown to be uniquely capable of driving increased behavioral polarization, even among people who are otherwise nearly totally identical. Two people with the same level of education, of the same age, same sex, same race, same geographical location, same level of religiosity, same issue positions and same ideological identity can be driven to significantly higher levels of bias against the outgroup party, activism and anger at their opposing presidential candidate, simply by moving their partisanship into alignment with their ideology. This phenomenon has already occurred in the American public, and if nearly identical people can be motivated to dislike, feel angered by and take action against their partisan outgroup simply because of the sorting that has already occurred en masse, the implications for

the behavioral changes in individuals who are not identical, and who make up the great majority of the electorate, are even stronger.

Third, the fact that sorting more powerfully effects behavioral polarization when partisanship is allowed to change than when ideology is allowed to change supports the argument made in Chapter 3 that party is the primary political identity. As Tajfel (1979) argued, the groups that are in the most direct competition are the most salient groups. Clearly, the results in Figure 5 demonstrate that ideological identity is also a salient political group, as ideological shifts into alignment do motivate increased behavioral polarization. However, the stronger results observed when partisanship is allowed to change are not surprising, considering that direct competition between the parties is the constant drumbeat of American politics, and the most relevant political outgroup is the opposing political party. In fact, all the measures of behavioral polarization are party-specific. Thus, when party moves from an unaligned to an aligned position, larger behavioral effects occur than when party is constrained.

Conclusions

The results presented in this chapter lend strong evidence to the theory that political identity sorting is capable of motivating behavioral polarization even when issue positions are unchanging. In regressions, when issue extremity is held constant, partisan-ideological sorting is capable of driving substantial increases in partisan bias, activism and anger. Therefore, even without any change in the distribution of issue opinions in the public, it is possible for the electorate as a whole to regard their outgroup partisans with increasing prejudice, to be driven to take action against the outgroup party and to feel anger in response to electoral challenges from the outgroup party. This can happen simply by bringing average citizens' partisan and

ideological identities into more consistent alignment, a phenomenon that has been repeatedly shown to be occurring in the American electorate.

Furthermore, the effects of identity on political behavior are not limited to the effects of partisanship. Partisan identity does have significant effects on behavioral polarization, but its effects are far stronger when it is supported by a consistent ideological identity. The sorting that has been observed to occur in recent decades has the ability to drive partisans further from each other, not necessarily in their issue positions, but in their sense that their political opponents are increasingly different from them. The potential for understanding across the parties decreases as sorted partisans grow more biased in their assessments of the two parties. The acrimony between partisans of both sides increases as more of them feel angry at the other side and are driven more powerfully to work to defeat each other. Even if the distribution of issue opinions does not polarize, the two sides of the American electorate are nonetheless strongly divided.

These results lend a great deal of support to the idea that sorting can increase behavioral polarization without a concurrent increase in issue extremity. However, the models presented here suffer from five major limitations. First, the measures of partisan and ideological identity are insufficient from a social identity perspective. A seven-point measure of identity is sure to miss what is likely a very large variation in identity strength between, say, a weak Democrat and an Independent who leans toward the Democratic party. A more fine-tuned measure of identity would likely help to provide a more precise assessment of the effects of identity alignment on behavioral polarization.

Second, the measures of anger and threat provided by the ANES data are similarly limited. Ideally, anger would be measured by more than a dichotomous response set, and the

threat to partisan identity should be experimentally manipulated, in order to assess the true causal relationship between identity threat and anger. Furthermore, using an outgroup candidate as a measure of partisan threat includes a great deal of noise, as different candidates provoke varying levels of anger due to their personalities, campaign styles and other unmeasurable contextual conditions. An experimentally-induced threat to the status of the party would provide a far cleaner test of the hypothesis that party threats increase anger among highly sorted individuals.

Third, the ANES data only include measures of party and ideological identity. However, a measure of other politically-linked identities can lend insight to a broader sorting phenomenon. Party and ideology are not the only identities to fall into alignment in recent decades. Racial identities, religious identities and political movement identities are also capable of being aligned with partisan identities, and in fact, have moved into alignment with party, as discussed in Chapter 2. A more thorough examination of the alignment of all of these identities would provide more insight into the effects of sorting on polarized behavior.

Fourth, the issue position measures available in the ANES data do not, on a regular basis, include a gauge of issue importance in addition to issue extremity. One potential argument against the results found here is that they have not given issue positions a fair enough test, with the strongest measure available. One way to enhance the effects of issue extremity on behavior is to combine this measure with one that assesses the importance of the issues to the respondent. An extreme issue position may not affect behavior if that issue is not also considered to be highly important.

Finally, due to the still-emerging effects of sorting on behavior, a more recent dataset would be of use, in order to better understand whether the effects of sorting are ongoing today.

The following chapter will address these limitations of the ANES data, by examining a relatively new dataset, collected by the author in November of 2011. This data uses more appropriate measures of social identity for a broader range of politically-linked identities, includes a better measure of anger in response to an experimentally manipulated threat to party status, and includes a measure of issue importance.

Chapter 7- The Effects of Multiple Identity Sorting on Behavioral Polarization

Though sorting is almost always used to refer to partisan-ideological sorting, the alignment of party-linked identities could theoretically include any social identities that can be linked to one party over the other. The effects of sorting on behavioral polarization therefore may be even stronger than they appear when only partisan and ideological identities are included. The alignment of racial, religious and political movement identities with the two parties that have been observed in recent years will likely magnify the effects of simple partisan-ideological sorting. This chapter examines the effects of multiple political identity sorting, comparing it against the effects of partisan identity alone and also against the effects of issue position extremity and importance.

A Better Set of Measures

This chapter also addresses some of the methodological limitations of the ANES data examined in the previous chapter, namely the relatively crude measurement of partisan and ideological identity, partisan threat, anger, and issue importance. The following models include social identity-oriented measures of identity, as described in Chapter 4. These more fine-grained measures of partisan, ideological, racial, religious and tea party identities provide a much stronger and more precise level of an individual's feeling of attachment to these social groups. Rather than simply strong, weak or leaning, these measures provide a widely varied scale of identification. As discussed in Chapter 3, the degree of attachment to a group is a crucial element of the effect of the group identity on behavior. Stronger affiliations lead to stronger

behavioral and emotional results, thus a measure that demonstrates differences between small gradations of group attachment is very helpful in examining these relationships.

The models predicting anger also include an experimental threat manipulation, in which respondents are randomly assigned to read a fabricated blog post designed to threaten or support the status of their in-group party in the upcoming election²⁴. This threat manipulation is essential for accurately determining the effect of sorting and identity on levels of anger. As discussed in Chapter 3, social identities do not induce anger unless the group is under threat. A strongly identified group member is not perpetually angry. When the group is threatened, however, they react with the most intense levels of anger. According to intergroup emotions theory, the stronger the attachment to the group, the stronger the angry reaction to that threat will be. Furthermore, the identity alignment literature suggests that group-based threats are capable of inducing higher levels of anger among individuals with highly aligned sets of identities, who are psychologically less equipped to cope with threat due to their relative isolation from people who are perceived as different from themselves. By threatening the party of a random selection of respondents, it becomes possible to assess whether threat is indeed capable of inducing anger among strongly, but not weakly identified partisans, and among those with the most highly aligned sets of party-linked identities. The ANES data, in comparison, used a blunt group threat (the outgroup presidential candidate) and applied it to the entire sample. The threat manipulation is also interesting from a simply political perspective, as it mimics language that partisans are likely to come across on a fairly regular basis, particularly during election seasons. This threat

²⁴ Depending on the party of the respondent, the threat manipulation could also be used as a message of reassurance. For example, a message reading “Democrats are going to lose the election” would be a threat if read by a Democrat, but a reassuring message if read by a Republican.

manipulation therefore offers a view of how (and which) citizens will respond emotionally to a regularly-occurring phenomenon in American politics.

In response to the threat manipulation, the assessment of anger consists of a more refined three-item measure, offering a greater range of angry response than the dichotomous item used by the ANES. Therefore not only does this data include a more precise measure of identity strength, it also includes a more varied measure of anger, allowing for the ability to examine the effect of small changes in one or the other, in the presence or absence of threat.

Also, a new assessment of partisan bias is introduced, one that accounts for a more personal feeling of bias against members of the out-group party and is based in the concept of social distance. Finally, the issue extremity measure is strengthened by weighting each issue by its rated importance in order to create the “issue polarization” scale.

Using these improved measures, and taking account of the role of multiple political identities, this chapter examines three key hypotheses:

1. Political identity sorting increases political bias, activism and anger on an individual level, even when issue positions are held constant.
2. The effects of political identity sorting on behavior are greater than those of partisan identity alone.
3. Issue position polarization does not affect political bias, activism and anger as strongly as political identity alignment or partisan strength.

Multiple Identity Sorting

The effect of sorting on behavioral polarization depends entirely on the reliability of the sorting relationships chosen here. For the purposes of this study, and in accord with prior research, Democratic identity is theorized to be linked to Liberal (Jacobson, 2006; Levendusky, 2009), Secular (Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope, 2005; Green, Smidt, Guth & Kellstedt, 2005; Green, Kellstedt, Smidt & Guth, 2007; Jacobson, 2006; Layman, 1997; 2001; Woodberry and Smith, 1998) and Black (Giles and Hertz, 1994) identities, while Republican identity is theorized to be linked to Conservative (Jacobson, 2006; Levendusky, 2009), Evangelical (Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope, 2005; Green, Smidt, Guth & Kellstedt, 2005; Green, Kellstedt, Smidt & Guth, 2007; Jacobson, 2006; Layman, 1997; 2001; Woodberry and Smith, 1998) and Tea Party (Campbell and Putnam, 2011) identities. These identities are used due to their established party linkages in previous political science research. The data reflect that these are appropriate linkages. Table 7.1 provides the mean identity scores for each identity measured, by party.

In Table 7.1, each identity is measured on a scale from 0 to 1. Those who do not claim the identity at all score a 0 on the scale, while those who are most strongly identified score a 1. The mean values are taken from the entire sample of Democrats or Republicans, including independents who lean toward one party. Shaded cells represent the identities that are theoretically linked in each column.

Table 7.1. Mean identity scores by party (0-1 scale)

	Mean identity score	
	Democrats	Republicans
Party Identity	0.64	0.62
Liberal Identity	0.60	0.01
Conservative Identity	0.07	0.72
Secular Identity	0.31	0.18
Black Identity	0.13	0.02
Evangelical Identity	0.11	0.34
Tea Party Identity	0.04	0.51
n	350	382

In this sample, the theorized identity linkages are supported. Democrats and Republicans identify with their parties to a similar extent, but Democrats have significantly higher mean scores on liberal, secular and black identities, while Republicans have higher mean scores on conservative, evangelical and tea party identities. These are therefore suitable identities for examining the effects of identity alignment. As these linked identities grow more aligned, or people are more thoroughly sorted, the alignment should have increasing effects on behavioral polarization – ingroup bias, activism and anger. In line with the identity alignment literature, party-consistent identities will strengthen the effect of identity on behavior while party-inconsistent identities will weaken the effect. A more precise examination of the particular alignment of each possible combination of identities is explored in Appendix 4.3, where every combination is used in a separate regression to predict the various types of behavioral polarization. For each dependent variable, the full sorting measure, accounting for all eight identities, matches or outperforms the effect of the simple party-ideology sorting measure. The multiple identity sorting measure should thus be uniquely capable of explaining changes in behavioral polarization. Each type of behavioral polarization is examined individually, below.

Ingroup Bias

Political identity sorting is hypothesized to increase partisan ingroup bias, even while issue positions are held constant. Furthermore, this effect is expected to be larger than the effect of partisan identity alone. Ingroup bias is measured here in two ways. In Table 7.2, ingroup bias is measured as the difference between a respondent's placement of the two parties on a feeling thermometer. The determinants of this thermometer bias are examined in two models. First, the effect of partisan identity alone is used to predict thermometer bias. The reason for examining only partisan identity and not other identities is that thermometer bias (and all the other measures

of behavioral polarization) is party-specific. The party is the ingroup in relation to the ingroup bias these models are predicting. Thus it is the partisan identity that should primarily predict the various measures of behavioral polarization. The measure of political identity sorting is then examined, to determine the relative effect of a partisan identity that is aligned with multiple other social identities.

As seen in the first column of Table 7.2, partisan identity is a powerful predictor of thermometer bias. An increase from weakest to strongest partisan identity increases thermometer bias by about 44 percent of the range of bias. In predicted values, a person who feels no attachment to the party, holding all else equal, would rate the two parties as 30 points apart (out of 100). A person who feels moderately attached to the party, halfway up the scale of attachment, would rate the two parties as 51 points apart on the feeling thermometer. A very strongly attached partisan, however, who is attached as it is possible to be, rates the parties 73 points apart on the feeling thermometer²⁵. This is a large result, larger even than the findings in Chapter 6.

However, identity sorting is shown in the second column of Table 7.2 to be a more powerful predictor of thermometer bias. Moving from the least-sorted set of political identities to the most sorted set of political identities increases thermometer bias by about 55 percent of the total range of bias. In predicted values, a person at the lowest end of the sorting scale, who is only very weakly identified with their party, and is also strongly identified with all of the groups that are associated with the opposing party, would place the two parties 23 points apart on the feeling thermometer, holding all else equal. In comparison, a person who is strongly identified

²⁵ There are 11 people, or 1.18 percent of the sample who score a 0 on the partisan identity scale, and 99 people, or 10.59 percent of the sample, who score the highest score of 1.

with their party and also strongly identified with all of the groups that are aligned with that party would place the two parties 76 points apart on the feeling thermometer²⁶. Partisan identity is thus capable of driving ingroup bias, but when multiple political identities come into alignment with party, this effect is enhanced.

Interestingly, a large portion of the sorting effect appears to occur at the lower end of the spectrum of ingroup bias. The alignment of identities doesn't simply drive increased ingroup bias at the high end, but it even more powerfully *reduces* ingroup bias when identities are non-aligned. A weak partisan is predicted to display more thermometer bias than a weak partisan with cross-cutting identities. A set of cross-cutting identities is capable, therefore, of reducing prejudice against the outgroup party, even when issue positions are unchanging. Cross-cutting identities, therefore, can be seen as a true motivation toward partisan accord in the electorate. As the number of Americans with cross-cutting identities dwindles, this force for political cohesion in the electorate also declines, effectively increasing partisan bias in the electorate as a whole even if issue positions remain moderate.

²⁶ Only one person scores a 0 on the multiple identity sorting scale. No respondent scores a 1, but three respondents receive a score of .96. Thus, when calculating the predicted probabilities, the score .96 is used to represent the high end of identity sorting.

Table 7.2. Determinants of Thermometer Bias

	Partisan Identity Model	Identity Sorting Model
Partisan Identity	0.44 (.04)	
Political Identity Sorting		0.55 (.09)
Issue Polarization	0.22 (.06)	0.19 (.07)
Sophistication	0.18 (.05)	0.09 (.05)
White	0.02 (.04)	0.01 (.04)
Hispanic	0.03 (.04)	0.05 (.04)
Black	0.00 (.05)	0.02 (.06)
Male	-0.04 (.02)	-0.05 (.02)
Income	0.00 (.00)	0.00 (.00)
Age	0.01 (.01)	0.02 (.01)
Church Attendance	0.03 (.03)	0.03 (.03)
Constant	-0.09 (.07)	-0.11 (.08)
n	721	721
R-squared	0.23	0.15

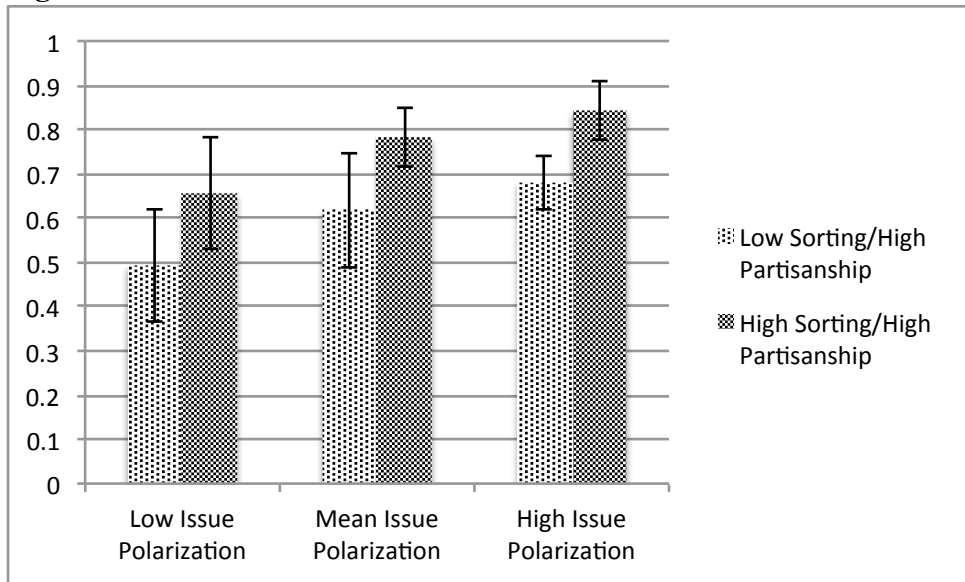
Note: OLS regressions with robust standard errors. Bold coefficients are significant at the $p < .05$ level.

In contrast, moderate issue positions do not have the same prejudice-reducing effect as cross-cutting identities. When issue position extremity weighted by importance (for the sake of simplicity, referred to as “issue polarization”) is held constant, the powerful effect of identity sorting remains. In addition, issue polarization has an effect that is less than half the size of the effect of identity sorting. Moving from the most moderate, unimportant issues to the most extreme and important issue positions increases thermometer bias by 19 percent of the total range of bias when sorting is held constant. Holding all else constant, a person who holds the most moderate position on all issues and finds them all unimportant places the two parties 44 points apart on the feeling thermometer, while a person who holds the most extreme positions on all issues and finds them all extremely important places the two parties 63 points apart on the feeling thermometer²⁷. Though significant, this effect is nearly three times smaller than the effect of sorting. Not only that, but the low end of issue polarization drives a level of thermometer bias that is 21 points higher than the low end of identity sorting, and the high end of issue polarization drives a level of thermometer bias that is 13 points lower than the highest level of identity sorting. While many people may argue that their reasons for feeling warmly toward one party over the other are largely issue-based, these results suggest that while issue position extremity and importance do play a part in generating thermometer bias, they do not tell the whole story. Moderate issue positions do not inhibit thermometer bias and extreme issue positions do not increase thermometer bias as powerfully as low and high levels of sorting are able to do. A very large portion of thermometer bias is generated by the psychological effects of the convergence of party-linked social identities.

²⁷ One person scores a 0 on the issue polarization measure, holding the most moderate positions on all issues and finding none of them important, and 29 people score a 1, holding the most extreme positions on all issues and finding them all extremely important.

The effects of identity sorting on behavior are larger, in Table 7.2, than the effects of partisan identity alone, and issue position polarization. As a more concrete example of the relative effects of partisanship, issue polarization and sorting on thermometer bias, Figure 7.1 examines predicted values of thermometer bias at high levels of partisanship, varying the level of sorting as well as the level of issue polarization. All other variables are held at their means or modes. These results demonstrate two important points. First, when partisanship is strong but unaligned with other party-linked identities, levels of thermometer bias are significantly lower than when a strong partisan identity is well-aligned with other party-linked identities. Second, this is true across three levels of issue position polarization. Though thermometer bias is slightly lower when issue polarization is low compared to when issue polarization is high, the difference between sorted partisans and unsorted partisans is significant no matter whether issue positions are polarized or moderate. Thus even in the moderate middle of the electorate, where partisans from both sides find common ground on issues, a sorted identity is capable of driving citizens to feel increasingly warmly toward their own party and coolly toward their partisan opponents.

Figure 7.1. Predicted Values of Thermometer Bias



Note: Predicted values drawn from an OLS model identical to those in Table 2, but including both partisan identity and sorting in the same model. All variables not indicated are held at their means. High sorting is limited to the highest sorting score in the sample, .96, rather than 1.0. Low sorting is set to the lowest sorting score that a strong partisan can achieve, which is .10. This represents a strong partisan who is minimally identified with the party-linked groups and maximally identified with the opposing-party-linked groups. Originating regression can be found in Appendix 7.1.

An alternative measure of ingroup bias is one that takes account of respondents' willingness to engage in social contact with members of the opposing political party. This is not a typical measure of ingroup bias in political science, but something similar has very recently been used on two occasions. Iyengar et al (2012) found that partisans are increasingly socially distant from each other, that is, they strongly dislike one another, do not want their children to marry members of the opposing party, and consider members of the outgroup to exhibit negative stereotypical traits. Similarly, Hui (2013) has found that individuals feel less satisfaction with their neighborhoods when they are told that outgroup partisans live there. The concept of social distance is particularly interesting because it specifically targets the feelings that partisans have toward their fellow citizens, not simply the polarized elites. Here, it is measured as the willingness to spend occasional social time with, live next-door to, be intimate friends with or marry a member of the each party. Table 7.3 examines the determinants of this type of social distance bias, measured here as the difference between the social distance scores given by a respondent to each party²⁸.

The first column of Table 7.3 demonstrates the impact of partisan identity on social distance bias. Partisan identity is a strong predictor of social distance bias, with a change from weakest to strongest partisanship increasing social distance bias by 31 percent of the total range of bias. In predicted values, holding all else equal, a person who feels no attachment to their party receives a social distance bias score of .07, suggesting that in the full range of bias, they are 7 percent more willing to spend time with members of their own party. A person who is intensely attached to their party, on the other hand feels 38 percent more willing to spend time with members of their own party. In the second column of Table 7.3, however, political identity

²⁸ When measured simply as the social distance from the opposing party, conclusions are unchanged.

sorting is a far stronger predictor of this type of bias. An increase from least-sorted to most-sorted increases social distance bias by 56 percent of the total range of bias. In predicted values, holding all else equal, a person at the lowest end of the sorting scale, who is only very weakly identified with their party, and is also strongly identified with all of the groups that are associated with the opposing party, would receive a social distance bias score of *negative* .09, suggesting that they would actually prefer to spend time with members of the opposing party. In comparison, a person who is strongly identified with their party and also strongly identified with all of the groups that are aligned with that party, is 46 percent more willing to spend time with members of their own party. Again, not only is sorting more powerfully capable of driving social distance bias than partisanship alone, but it does so at both ends of the spectrum of bias. A strong partisan is less biased than a strong partisan with a strong set of party-linked identities, while a weak partisan is more biased than a weak partisan with cross-cutting identities. Furthermore, both of these effects are robust to the effect of issue position polarization. Even when issue positions are held constant, those with well-sorted identities are far less willing to engage socially with those in the opposing political party than those with unsorted identities.

Table 7.3. Determinants of Social Distance Bias

	Partisan Identity Model	Identity Sorting Model
Partisan Identity	0.31 (.04)	
Political Identity Sorting		0.56 (.10)
Issue Polarization	0.30 (.06)	0.24 (.06)
Sophistication	0.05 (.04)	-0.04 (.05)
White	0.05 (.04)	0.03 (.04)
Hispanic	0.08 (.04)	0.09 (.05)
Black	0.13 (.05)	0.13 (.05)
Male	-0.01 (.02)	-0.01 (.02)
Income	-0.01 (.00)	-0.01 (.00)
Age	0.00 (.01)	0.01 (.01)
Church Attendance	0.04 (.03)	0.05 (.03)
Constant	-0.20 (.07)	-0.27 (.07)
n	721	721
R-squared	0.15	0.15

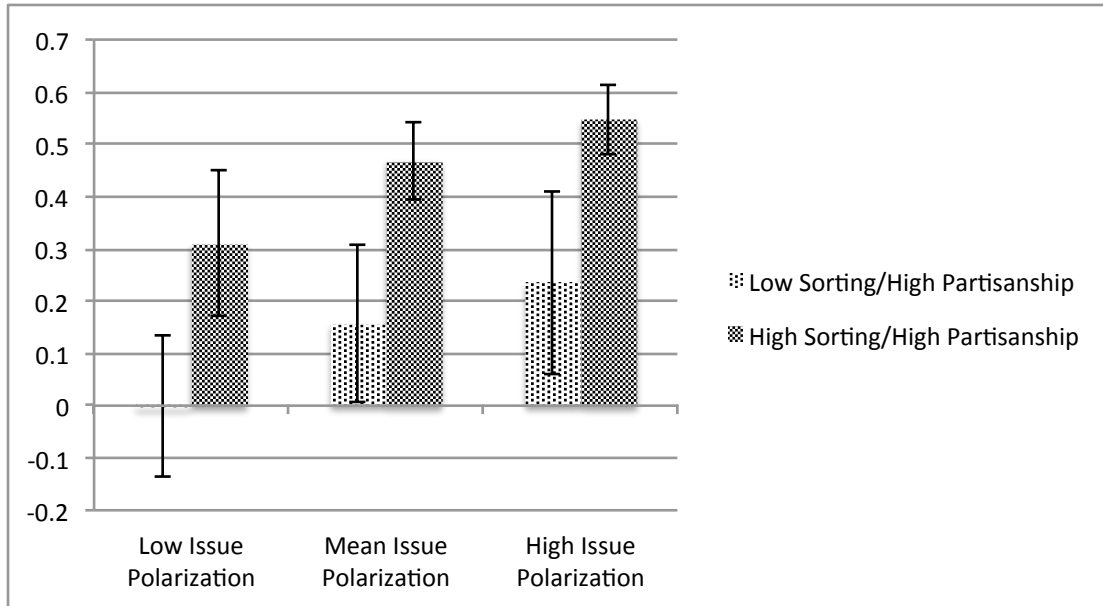
Note: OLS regressions with robust standard errors. Bold coefficients are significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Issue position polarization, however, is also capable of increasing social distance bias. When controlling for sorting, a change from moderate, unimportant issue positions to extreme, highly important issue positions increases social distance bias by about 24 percent of the total range of bias, a similar magnitude as the effect of partisan identity. Holding all else equal, a person with the most moderate positions on all issues who considers none to be important is 10 percent more willing to spend time with members of their own party. A person with the most extreme positions on all issues who considers them all to be extremely important is 34 percent more willing to spend time with members of the ingroup party. This is a significant and relatively large effect, but it is still half the size of the effect of political identity sorting. A person with moderate issue positions is more socially intolerant than a person with cross-cutting identities, and a person with extreme issue positions is more socially tolerant than a person with highly aligned identities. Thus, the person who doesn't want a member of the opposing party as a next-door neighbor is being fueled partially by logical political disagreement, but also to a large extent by the powerful alignment of multiple political identities, making the "other-ness" of the opposing party member increasingly insurmountable, even on a social level.

As an additional demonstration, Figure 7.2 presents the predicted values of social distance bias when partisan identity is strong and sorting and issue polarization are permitted to vary. All other variables are held at their means. The results are similar to those found in the case of thermometer bias. First, when partisanship is high but unaligned with other party-linked identities, levels of social distance bias are significantly lower than when a strong partisan identity is well-aligned with other party-linked identities. Second, this is true across the three levels of issue position polarization. Though social distance bias is generally lower when issue polarization is low compared to when issue polarization is high, the difference between sorted

partisans and unsorted partisans is significant no matter whether issue positions are polarized or moderate. Thus, highly sorted partisans will be biased against their out-party friends, neighbors and romantic interests even when they have weak positions on, and care little about political issues. Not only that, but even strong partisans with cross-cutting identities will demonstrate the most tolerance toward their political opponents. Once again, the force for political harmony appears to be the cross-cutting identities that are quickly disappearing, rather than a moderate set of issue positions. Even in a group of partisans who all hold moderate, overlapping issue positions, a set of sorted identities will drive them to dislike each other on a social level.

Figure 7.2. Predicted Values of Social Distance Bias



Note: Predicted values drawn from an OLS model identical to those in Table 3, but including both partisan identity and sorting in the same model. All variables not indicated are held at their means. High sorting is limited to the highest sorting score in the sample, .96, rather than 1.0. Low sorting is set to the lowest sorting score that a strong partisan can achieve, which is .10. This represents a strong partisan who is minimally identified with the party-linked groups and maximally identified with the opposing-party-linked groups. Originating regression can be found in Appendix 7.1.

Activism

Tajfel's first imperative of a social identity is to maintain a positive identity in relation to the outgroup (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). If your party loses an election, your group loses its positive identity. In that case, according to Tajfel, you have two options: to leave the group or to work to make it better than the outgroup. As the identity grows stronger, and more identities line up behind it, leaving the group becomes less possible, and action becomes necessary. As political identities come into alignment, the effects of identity on political action should increase. These effects are likely to be smaller than the effects of sorting on bias and anger due to the fact that the literature on identity alignment directly predicts effects of alignment on bias and anger, but only indirectly predicts increased activism, via strengthened partisan identity, which drives partisans to work to defend the status of the party.

The dependent variable in Table 7.4 is intention to donate or volunteer to candidates or parties in the 2012 election (an index of four dummy variables). Table 7.4 demonstrates that partisan identity alone is capable of motivating significant levels of political action. Moving from weakest to strongest partisanship increases intention to take action by 25 percent of the total range of activism. This is equivalent to adding one new activity. In predicted values, holding all else constant, a very weak partisan will have an activism score of .14, participating in less than one activity. A strong partisan, on the other hand, will have an activism score of .40, participating in nearly two activities.

Once partisan identity is aligned with other political identities, however, the effect of the sorted political identities is to increase activism by 36 percent of the total range of activism. In predicted values, a weak partisan with cross-cutting identities will have an activism score of .07,

half the score of the weak partisan alone. However, a strong partisan with highly aligned identities will have an activism score of .43. This is a significant increase, and one that is all the more remarkable because it is robust to the effects of past activism. Even when levels of prior activism are held constant (a particularly stringent test), partisan identity sorting is capable of motivating large increases in intention to participate in politics. And again, cross-cutting identities have a strong dampening effect on activism.

The effects of issue positions are notably non-existent in these models. Holding highly extreme issue positions that are considered to be highly important has no effect on a person's intention to participate in politics. Once the effects of partisan identity, sorting and past activism are included, the effect of holding a strong position on political issues has no added effect of increasing the intention to participate in politics²⁹. Contrary to what we normally think of as motivations toward political action, identity and identity sorting have a large effect on activism while issue positions, the instrumental reasons for political engagement, are not driving this involvement. In Table 7.4, activism, or at least the intention to be active, is powerfully driven by identity politics, and the more identities are aligned with partisan identity, the stronger the effects.

²⁹ It could be argued that controlling for past activism is an unfair test of the strength of issue polarization on action, considering that issue concerns might have driven past levels of activism. However, in models where past activism is removed, issue polarization still does not reach significance in predicting activism.

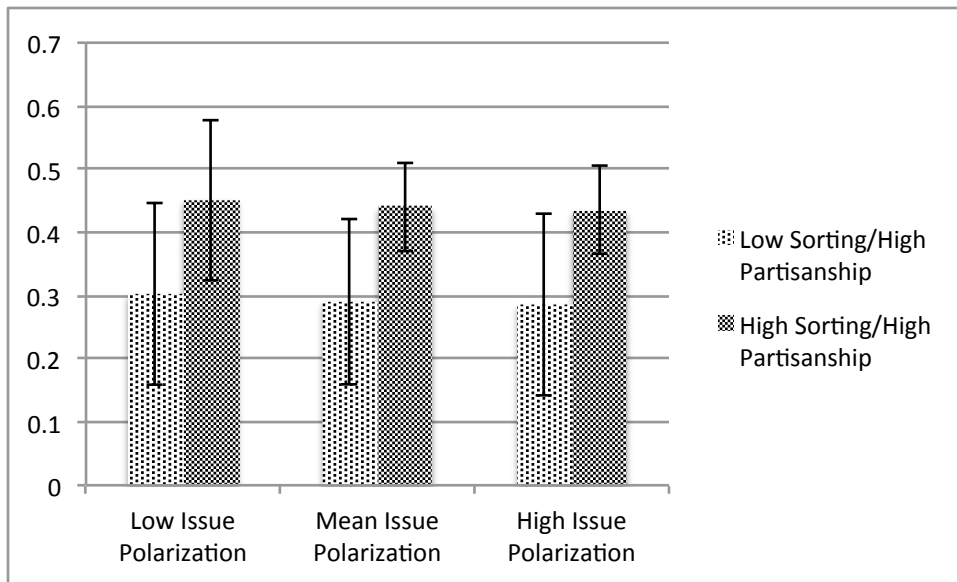
Table 7.4. Determinants of Political Activism

	Partisan Identity Model	Identity Sorting Model
Partisan Identity	0.25 (.05)	
Political Identity Sorting		0.36 (.09)
Past Activism	0.64 (.04)	0.64 (.04)
Issue Polarization	0.01 (.06)	-0.01 (.06)
Sophistication	0.10 (.05)	0.04 (.05)
White	-0.05 (.04)	-0.06 (.04)
Hispanic	0.04 (.05)	0.06 (.05)
Black	0.05 (.05)	0.06 (.05)
Male	0.06 (.02)	0.06 (.02)
Income	0.01 (.00)	0.01 (.00)
Age	0.00 (.01)	0.00 (.01)
Church Attendance	-0.02 (.03)	-0.01 (.03)
Constant	-0.29 (.08)	-0.31 (.08)
n	722	722
R-squared	0.47	0.46

Note: OLS regressions with robust standard errors. Bold coefficients are significant at the $p < .05$ level.

The relative unimportance of issues in predicting future political activism is underscored in Figure 7.3, where predicted values of activism are examined. Between identical levels of sorting, activism is unchanged across all three levels of issue polarization. However, as in the case of ingroup bias, activism is significantly affected by sorting. A strong partisan whose party-linked identities are cross-cutting is significantly less likely to participate in politics than a strong partisan whose party-linked identities are in alignment, regardless of the strength of the issue positions this person holds. Thus, while issue positions may be important to citizens in their conception of politics, these issue positions don't motivate political action once group identities are taken into account. As our party-linked identities move into alignment, we grow more likely to take action in support of our ingroup parties, whether we have extreme issue positions or not. Even the most moderate citizens take the same amount of action as the citizens with the most extreme issue positions. Thus, the moderation of issue positions in the electorate provides little information about whether the nation is poised to fight partisan battles. The alignment of party-linked identities, however, is quite informative in determining whether the nation is lining up to take electoral action. Highly sorted identities drive action, while cross-cutting identities reduce action, and as sorting continues to increase, we should expect to see continuing increases in political activism. When it comes to activism, it does not matter whether citizens' issue positions are overlapping.

Figure 7.3. Predicted Values of Activism



Note: Predicted values drawn from an OLS model identical to those in Table 4, but including both partisan identity and sorting in the same model. All variables not indicated are held at their means. High sorting is limited to the highest sorting score in the sample, .96, rather than 1.0. Low sorting is set to the lowest sorting score that a strong partisan can achieve, which is .10. This represents a strong partisan who is minimally identified with the party-linked groups and maximally identified with the opposing-party-linked groups. Originating regression can be found in Appendix 7.1.

Anger

Anger is elicited from strong group members or highly sorted group members only when the group is perceived to be under threat. The sense of group power that comes from a strong group identity, the desire to aggressively defend the group, and the lack of exposure to conflict that comes from a highly aligned set of identities can all cause sorted partisans to react with outsized levels of anger when confronted with a threat to the group's status. Partisans in contemporary politics are routinely exposed to threats to their party's status, via radio talk shows, cable news, political blogs, and election forecasters.

In this study, partisan threat was simulated by an experimental manipulation embedded into the survey protocol. Respondents read a fabricated blog passage that threatened the defeat or assured the victory of the respondent's party or the respondent's ideological platform in the 2012 election. Respondents subsequently assessed their own feelings of anger in response to what they had read. For the purposes of this study, the threats to party and ideological platform are combined, as they did not differ in the level of anger they created. Democrat-threatening and Republican-threatening messages were randomly assigned to the entire sample, therefore a single message acted as a threat when read by one party, but as a message of reassurance when read by the other party. There was a control condition that did not read any message, but also unfortunately did not report levels of anger, and therefore are not included in these analyses. The measure of threat, therefore is coded 1 if the respondent read an ingroup-threatening message and 0 if the respondent read an ingroup-supporting message.

Table 7.5 demonstrates the varying effects of partisan identity, identity sorting and issue position polarization on feelings of anger. The interactive terms are shaded, for ease of interpretation. Because the threat variable is a dummy, the interactive term can be interpreted as

the effect of the theoretical variable in the presence of threat. In the first two models, the effects of partisan identity and identity sorting in the presence of threat are examined, respectively, while holding issue position extremity constant. However, a fairer test of the respective effects of identity sorting and issue positions would be to interact issue positions with threat. The third model in Table 7.5 demonstrates interactions between issue position polarization and threat.

In the first column of Table 7.5, partisan identity is shown to significantly motivate anger in the presence of a threat to the party. Moving from weakest to strongest partisan identity in the presence of a party threat increases anger by 24 percent of the total range of anger. In predicted values, holding all else equal, a weak partisan under threat will report an anger score of .53 out of 1.0, while a strong partisan under threat will report an anger score of .77. Consistent with prior results, strong partisans react with more anger to party threats, even when holding issue position extremity constant.

In the second column of Table 7.5, the effects of identity sorting are shown to be markedly stronger than those of partisan identity alone. Moving from least sorted to most sorted in the presence of threat increases anger by 92 percent of the total range of anger. This effect is nearly four times larger than the effect of partisan identity alone. In predicted values, holding all else equal, a weak partisan with cross-cutting identities will report an anger score of .12 after reading a message threatening their party. A strong partisan with strongly aligned party-linked identities is predicted to report an anger score of 1.04, higher than the anger scale reaches. Even when issue positions are held constant, individuals with highly sorted political identities are powerfully angered when they read a suggestion that their political party will not win the election in 2012. That this effect is so much larger than the effect of partisan identity

underscores that partisan identity is not the only important political identity, and that as other party-linked identities align with partisanship, citizens become significantly more easily angered.

In comparison, issue positions are also capable of motivating anger in response to party threats, but the effects are smaller than the size of the effect of identity sorting. In the third column of Table 7.5, moving from weakest to strongest issue positions in the presence of a threat to the ingroup party increases anger by 54 percent of the total range of anger. This is a significant effect, and suggests that issue positions do motivate political anger. In fact, the effect of issue polarization on anger is double the effect of partisan identity alone. In predicted values, holding all else constant (though not controlling for sorting or partisan identity³⁰), a person who holds the most moderate positions on every issue and considers all of them to be unimportant will report an anger score of .32 when exposed to a threat. A person who holds the most extreme positions on every issue and considers all of them to be extremely important will report an anger score of .86. The rise in political anger is therefore not content-free, but the alignment of political identities is an even more powerful driver of anger than are issue positions.

³⁰ This makes no difference in the size or significance of the issue/threat interactive term.

Table 7.5. Determinants of anger in response to partisan threat

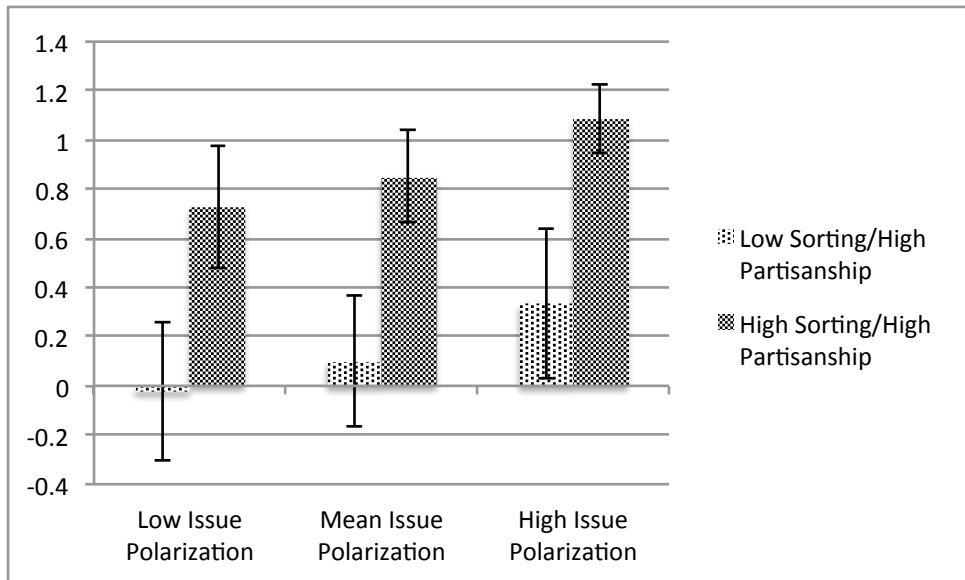
	Partisan Identity Model	Identity Sorting Model	Issue Polarization Model
Partisan Identity	-0.09 (.06)		
Political Identity Sorting		-0.56 (.12)	
Issue Polarization	0.15 (.06)	0.17 (.06)	-0.11 (.07)
Threat	0.35 (.06)	-0.07 (.10)	0.14 (.07)
IdentityXThreat	0.24 (.09)		
SortingXThreat		0.92 (.16)	
Issue PolarizationX Threat			0.54 (.11)
Sophistication	0.14 (.05)	0.13 (.05)	0.12 (.05)
White	0.03 (.05)	0.05 (.04)	0.04 (.04)
Hispanic	0.03 (.05)	0.05 (.04)	0.04 (.05)
Black	-0.16 (.06)	-0.14 (.05)	-0.15 (.05)
Male	0.02 (.02)	0.02 (.02)	0.03 (.02)
Income	0.00 (.00)	0.00 (.00)	0.00 (.00)
Age	0.01 (.01)	0.01 (.01)	0.01 (.01)
Church Attendance	-0.02 (.03)	-0.03 (.03)	-0.04 (.03)
Constant	-0.02 (.08)	0.22 (.09)	0.10 (.08)
n	690	695	695
R-squared	0.48	0.5	0.49

Note: OLS regressions with robust standard errors. Bold coefficients are significant in a one-tailed test at the .05 level. Shaded cells designate the interactive terms, for ease of interpretation.

It is also interesting to note that the coefficients related to simple partisan identity, political identity sorting and issue polarization represent the effects of those variables in the presence of a reassuring message. All three coefficients are negative, suggesting that a reassuring message reduces anger, but only in the case of sorting is this reduction in anger a significant change. Thus, while sorted individuals are wildly angered by threatening messages, they are also much more soothed by reassuring messages. This suggests a higher level of emotional volatility in highly sorted individuals, possibly contributing to the increasingly raucous political atmosphere in contemporary American politics, as one partisan's threat is another partisan's reassurance.

The results in Table 7.5 are confirmed by Figure 7.4, in which predicted values of anger in the presence of threat are examined at varying levels of sorting and issue polarization. When unsorted partisans are threatened by an electoral loss, they demonstrate almost no anger whatsoever. Even when these unsorted partisans hold very extreme positions on issues they consider to be highly important, their range of predicted levels of anger include values only slightly higher than zero. Once again, the cross-cutting identities that are increasingly uncommon in the American electorate are a strong civilizing force. Citizens with cross-cutting identities respond with very little anger to partisan threats, even when they are strongly partisan, care a great deal about issue outcomes and disagree strongly with the other side on every issue.

Figure 7.4. Predicted Values of Anger in the Presence of Threat



Note: Predicted values drawn from an OLS model identical to those in Table 5, but including partisan identity, sorting and issue polarization all interacting with threat in the same model. Predicted values reflect the indicated level of each variable in the presence of threat. All variables not indicated are held at their means, except for threat, which is constrained to its maximum value of 1. High sorting is limited to the highest sorting score in the sample, .96, rather than 1.0. Low sorting is set to the lowest sorting score that a strong partisan can achieve, which is .10. This represents a strong partisan who is minimally identified with the party-linked groups and maximally identified with the opposing-party-linked groups. Originating regression can be found in Appendix 7.1.

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However, when partisans identify with groups that are aligned with their party, their predicted levels of anger in response to threat are massive. Across all three levels of issue polarization, the confidence intervals around the predicted value of anger in response to threat include the maximum possible level of anger. While low levels of issue polarization do generally lead to lower levels of anger, even the most moderate issue positions and a sense that issues themselves are unimportant do not prevent a well-sorted partisan from feeling extreme levels of anger in response to a threat to their party. Thus, even if the nation as a whole holds generally moderate issue positions, this does not prevent extreme levels of partisan vitriol.

While partisans may believe that their anger in response to political events is due entirely to their firm convictions on political issues, these results suggest that the alignment of political identities has a very strong additional effect that is unrelated to issue positions. As identities are drawn into alignment, the psychological effect of this alignment is to make members of the opposing party appear more foreign and allow partisans to respond with increasing anger to political threats from these outsiders. Even when partisans can generally agree on issue outcomes, a highly sorted set of political identities and a threat to the party can still cause those partisans to be furious at each other.

This is an important point, because Americans *have* become more sorted, and talk about politics is not only increasingly available, it is also often focused on which party gains and which loses from any given political event. Threats to party status can be encountered often for a moderately interested citizen, and even those who are uninterested in politics are likely aware at the very least of the elections that occur every two years, whose outcome literally threatens the objective status of both parties. Thus even without a bimodal distribution of issue positions in

the electorate as a whole, the conditions are ripe for an electorate that is growing increasingly angry, hostile and disgusted at their political opponents.

Conclusions

The findings from this chapter strengthen the argument that political identity sorting can increase behavioral polarization, regardless of the levels of issue position polarization. The analyses presented here use improved measures of social identity and political identity sorting. Each identity is measured in a manner more consistent with social identity theory, and the measure of sorting includes a larger number of identities than simply partisanship and ideology. Unfortunately, with the exception of thermometer bias, the dependent variables used in this chapter are not comparable to those used in Chapter 6. However, in the case of thermometer bias the effect of sorting is larger when using the identity-based measure of multiple identity sorting than was seen in Chapter 6, when a non-identity based measure of only partisan-ideological sorting was examined.

The heterogeneous dependent variables are of use, however, in establishing the wide-ranging effects of sorting on behavioral polarization. Across three measures of ingroup bias (thermometer bias, like bias, social distance bias), two measures of activism (past activism, intention to participate), two measures of anger (dichotomous and a three-item index) in response to two types of threat (outgroup candidate and experimentally-manipulated blog post), political identity sorting has been shown in Chapters 6 and 7 to strongly motivate behavioral polarization. All of these results are robust to the effect of issue positions, whether they are measured as issue extremity or as issue extremity weighted by issue importance. When issue positions are held constant, sorting is capable of increasing behavioral polarization.

Not only are higher levels of sorting increasing behavioral polarization, but at the lowest levels of sorting, people who hold cross-cutting identities are the least behaviorally-polarized citizens. In the polarization debate, the argument is made that a generally issue-moderate electorate with largely overlapping issue positions is an indication that the partisans on both sides generally get along. However, these results suggest that issue moderation only partially helps partisans to get along, and, in fact, citizens who agree on many issues can still be very biased against and intolerant of each other, active to defeat each other, and extremely angry at each other. Issue moderation does not guarantee that partisans get along. What does appear to remove almost all traces of partisan discord is a set of cross-cutting identities. Across all four types of behavioral polarization, those with the most cross-cutting identities are the most tolerant of partisan opponents, the least biased against the outgroup party, the least active and nearly incapable of being angered by a partisan threat. If we want to find a good indication that there is no partisan rift in the country, issue positions are not enough. A nation of partisans with cross-cutting identities would go much farther in demonstrating a lack of partisan discord. Unfortunately, one thing that all sides of the polarization debate can agree on is that the number of citizens with cross-cutting identities is rapidly decreasing.

As our many social identities line up behind our parties, we can expect to see stronger indications of behavioral polarization in the electorate, due not just to political disagreements, but largely to psychological barriers that are being built between the parties, making it increasingly difficult for partisans to view each other impartially or fairly. As other identities fall into alignment with party, outgroup partisans become increasingly foreign, more difficult to sympathize with, more undesirable to speak to. Essentially, as sorting increases, prejudice grows between the two parties. In a political system set up to encourage competition between the

parties, and as Americans grow more sorted, every competition drives more anger and more action. This can all occur without any increase at all in the extremity or importance of Americans' issue opinions. Whether it has occurred without significant increases in issue extremity or importance has not yet been demonstrated.

The final remaining question, therefore, is to examine not only whether sorting is *capable* of affecting behavioral polarization when issues are unchanging, but also whether sorting *has* affected behavioral polarization to a greater extent than it has affected issue positions. If this is the case, the findings here will help to address the current debate in political science over whether polarization is occurring in the electorate. The previous chapters have already established that behavioral and issue polarization can move separately. If sorting is capable of driving behavioral polarization to a greater extent than it drives issue polarization, this will help to explain why behavioral polarization appears to be increasing faster than issue polarization. Chapter 8 will address this question, using ANES data in order to examine changes over time, in addition to the 2011 Polimetrix data.

Chapter 8 – Differential Effects of Sorting on Behavioral and Issue Polarization

Examining the effects of sorting on behavioral polarization while constraining issue positions to remain constant is one method of demonstrating the difference between behavioral and issue position polarization. It shows that sorting *can* increase behavioral polarization without an equivalent increase in issue polarization, but it does not show that sorting does do so or has done so. The separateness of behavioral and issue polarization is far less interesting if outside forces such as sorting act on the two types of polarization in equivalent ways. In order for political behavior to be more polarized than issue positions, it is important to demonstrate that the polarizing effects of partisan sorting are more powerfully applied to political behavior than to issue positions. If this is the case, it will help to demonstrate that American political behavior is currently decoupled from a pure assessment of issues.

This chapter will examine the differential effects of sorting on these two types of polarization in three steps. First, mean levels of behavioral and issue position polarization are examined at various levels of partisan-ideological identity sorting over time, using the cumulative ANES data file. Second, the relative predicted values of behavioral and issue polarization are measured at low versus high levels of sorting using the cumulative ANES data file and the 2011 Polimetrix data. Third, the ANES 1992-1996 panel data is examined to determine the levels of behavioral and issue polarization in the same individuals pre- and post-sorting, and these effects are compared against trends in the population as a whole, and trends among those whose sorting has decreased.

Mean Values of Polarization by Sorting Tercile

As a preliminary examination of the relative effects of sorting on behavioral and issue polarization, the partisan-ideological sorting score is separated into rough terciles in Figure 8.1, and levels of each type of polarization are examined at each tercile³¹ using ANES data. Dividing the sorting score by tercile provides a convenient estimate of low, moderate and high levels of sorting. In the first sub-figure of Figure 8.1, mean levels of issue position extremity are examined at each level of identity sorting. When observing mean levels of issue position extremity, the level of partisan-ideological sorting makes little difference. Though the difference between the mean issue position intensity at low and high levels of sorting is generally significant (except in 1998), its magnitude is small. The difference between the issue position extremity of an unsorted person and a highly sorted person is, on average, 5 percent of the total

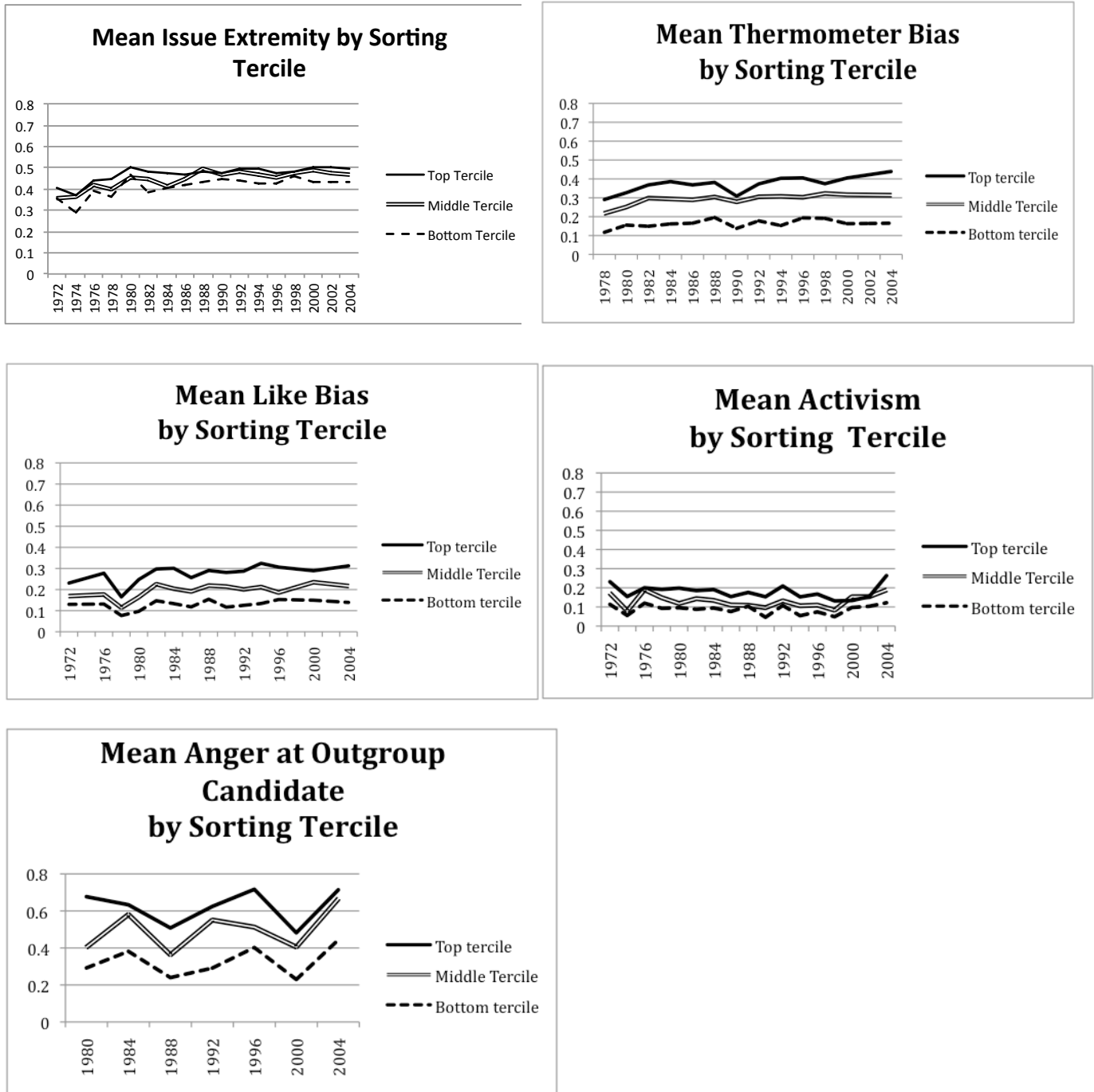
³¹ Because of clustering of respondent scores, exact terciles were impossible to obtain. The bottom tercile represents 31% of sample, middle tercile 30%, and top tercile 39%. However, I am confident that even these rough terciles reliably depict the desired low, moderate, and high levels of identity alignment that are observed in this sample. The mean values (on a 0 to 1 scale) of the partisan-ideological sorting score at each tercile are .05 in the bottom tercile, .15 in the middle tercile, and .45 in the top tercile. Despite the fact that partisan and ideological identities have been moving into alignment, it is still difficult to find respondents who score very highly on the 0–1 partisan-ideological sorting measure. Only 2% of respondents in the cumulative ANES file receive scores with values in the top third of the total range of this measure. In addition to examining terciles, I have also examined the measures of behavioral and issue polarization at three standard levels of the partisan-ideological sorting score (scores between 0 and 0.33, between 0.33 and 0.67, and between 0.67 and 1.0). Results do not substantively change. If anything, these results more dramatically support my hypotheses, but because of the wide discrepancy between the sample sizes at each value of the sorting score, I am more confident reporting results from the terciles, where I can be more certain that results are not the product of idiosyncratic artifacts created from small sample sizes.

range of issue position extremity. Thus, sorting is related to an increase in issue position extremity, but a small one.

The measures of behavioral polarization, on the other hand, demonstrate a stronger responsiveness to partisan-ideological sorting. When it comes to thermometer bias, not only are the mean levels of bias significantly different from each other at low versus high levels of sorting in every year, but the magnitude of the difference is large. The average difference between the mean levels of thermometer bias of unsorted and highly sorted respondents is more than 20 percent of the total range of bias between 1978 and 2004. Similarly, mean levels of like bias are significantly different from each other at low versus high levels of sorting in every year, and the mean difference between the like bias of the two groups is about 15 percent of the total range of bias. These results suggest that partisan bias is responsive to partisan-ideological sorting to an extent that exceeds the effect on issue position extremity.

Activism, though slightly less responsive to sorting, is still more responsive to sorting than is issue position extremity. The difference between the mean levels of activism at low and high levels of sorting is significant in every year, and the magnitude of this difference is, on average, about 9 percent of the total range of activism. This relationship is more consistent and larger than the relationship between sorting and issue position extremity.

Figure 8.1. Mean Issue and Behavioral Polarization by Partisan-Ideological Sorting Score (divided by tercile)



Note: All data are from ANES cumulative data file.

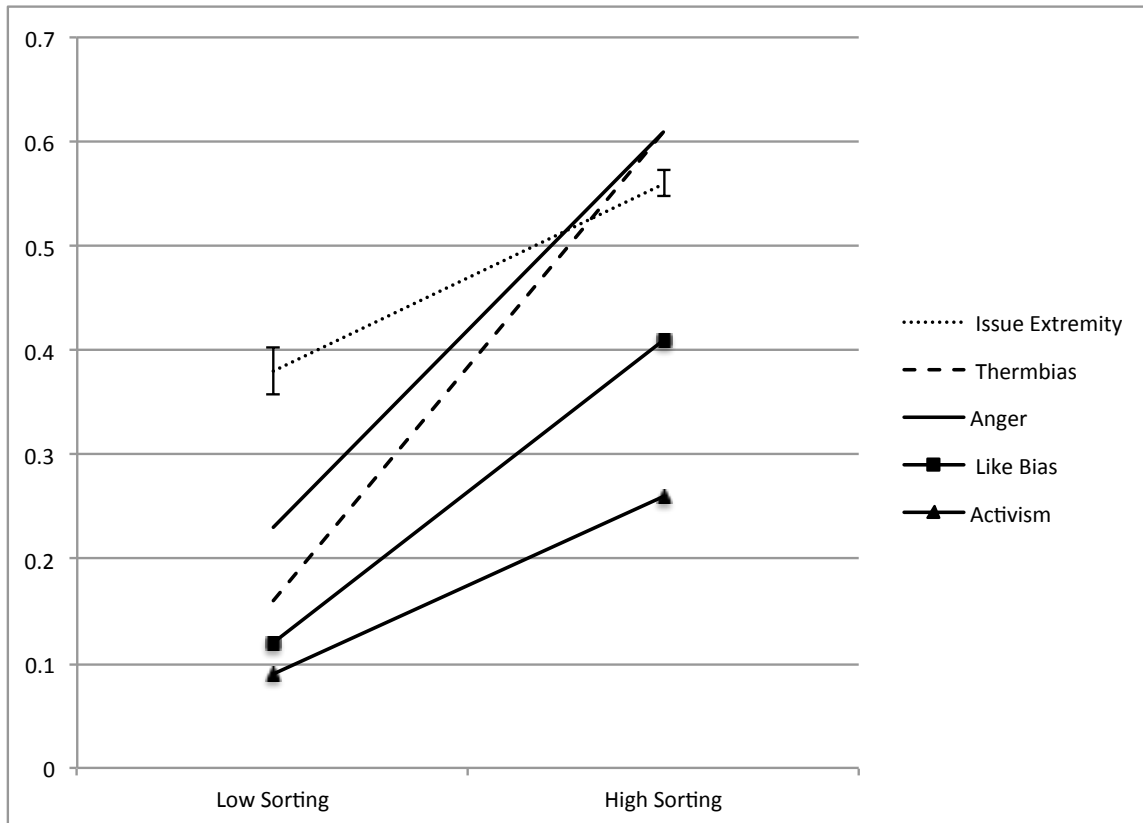
Finally, partisan-ideological sorting is related to very large increases in anger at the outgroup candidate. The average difference between unsorted and highly sorted respondents in whether or not they feel angry is about 30 percent. This difference is significant in every year. Highly sorted individuals are thus likely to be much more angry than unsorted individuals, but they are not likely to hold much more extreme issue positions. In general the results from Figure 8.1 suggest that levels of sorting are helpful in explaining differences in bias, activism and anger, but not as helpful for understanding differences between those with extreme and moderate issue positions. These results hint at the possibility that sorting drives behavioral polarization to a greater extent than it drives issue polarization. To further examine this question, however, a multivariate analysis is necessary.

Predicted Values

The second examination of the relationship between sorting and the two types of polarization uses predicted values of the various measures of behavioral and issue polarization, examining them at low and high values of sorting in Figure 8.2³². These predicted values are derived from OLS regression models (logit in the case of anger) controlling for demographic variables, using the pooled cumulative ANES data with standard errors clustered by year (see Appendix 8.1 for originating regressions).

³² Only the low and high values of sorting are shown here for ease of comparison and for visual simplicity. For predicted values across the entire range of the sorting measure, see Appendix 8.2.

Figure 8.2. Predicted Values of Behavioral and Issue Polarization at Low and High Party-Ideology Sorting



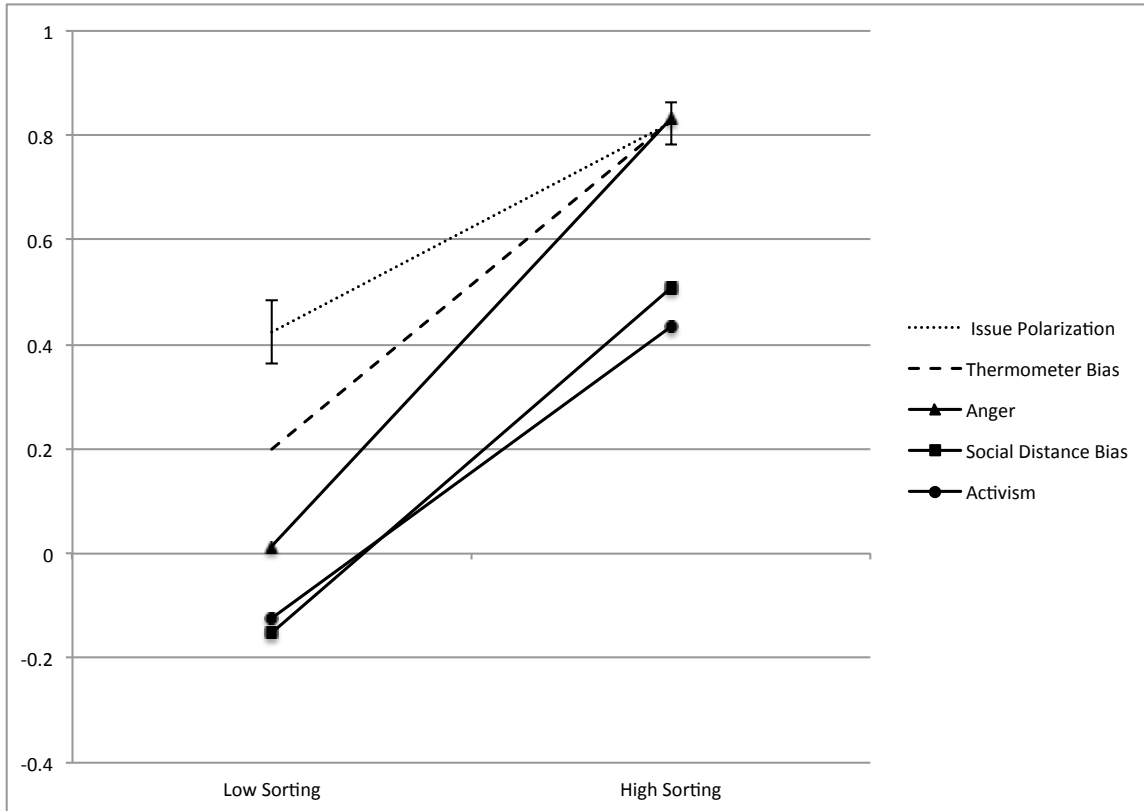
Note: Data drawn from ANES cumulative file. All variables except sorting are held at their means or modes. 95 percent confidence intervals are only shown in the case of issue extremity to improve data visibility. The increases in all four measures of behavioral polarization are significant.

The results in Figure 8.2 demonstrate that although sorting does have a significant effect on issue polarization, its effects on the four measures of behavioral polarization are significantly larger (with the exception of the effects on activism, which are nearly equivalent in this model). Moving from unsorted to fully sorted increases issue position extremity by 18 percent of the total range of issue extremity. In comparison, moving from unsorted to fully sorted increases thermometer bias by 45 percent of the range of bias, like bias by 29 percent of the range of bias, anger by 38 percent of the total range of anger, and activism by 17 percent of the range of activism. This means that as people's partisan and ideological identities move into alignment, their issue positions and levels of political activism increase to similar extents, but their bias in making assessments of the two parties and their anger increase significantly more. The effect would be an electorate that is more biased and angry than their issue positions alone could explain.

The equivalent effects of sorting on issue extremity and activism, however, may simply be an artifact of the imprecise measurement allowed by the ANES data. If these relationships are examined using more precise measures of all the theoretical variables, the effects are likely to be stronger. Figure 8.3 therefore examines the effects of sorting, using the social identity-based multiple identity sorting measure (see Appendix 8.1 for originating regressions)³³. Figure 8.3 also examines levels of social distance bias, anger in the presence of a controlled experimental threat, and intention to participate in the upcoming election as a measure of activism.

³³ Only the low and high values of sorting are shown here for ease of comparison and for visual simplicity. For predicted values across the entire range of the sorting measure, see Appendix 8.3.

Figure 8.3. Predicted Values and Marginal Effects of Behavioral and Issue Polarization at Low and High Levels of Multiple Identity Sorting



Note: Data drawn from 2011 Polimetrix survey. Standard errors are only shown in the case of issue extremity to improve data visibility. The increases in all four measures of behavioral polarization are significant. All variables except sorting are held at their means or modes. In the case of anger, values represent the average marginal effect of threat on anger at the indicated level of sorting.

In Figure 8.3, a stronger measure of issue polarization is used, weighting issue extremity by rated issue importance. Using this stronger measure of issue polarization, the effect of moving from a cross-cutting set of party-linked identities to a highly sorted set of identities is to increase issue polarization by about 40 percent of the total range of issue polarization. This is a far stronger effect than that seen in the ANES data, and suggests that both the stronger measure of sorting and the improved measure of issue polarization help to reveal a very real effect of sorting on issue polarization. However, the key question here is whether this same sorting is capable of motivating even higher levels of behavioral polarization.

Figure 8.3 demonstrates that this is indeed the case. Moving from an unsorted set of party-linked identities to a highly sorted set of identities increases thermometer bias by 63 percent of the total range of thermometer bias. This is significantly higher than the effects of sorting on thermometer bias seen in the ANES data in Figure 8.2, and it is also significantly higher than the effect of sorting on issue polarization in Figure 8.3. Moving from least to most sorted also increases social distance bias by about 66 percent of the total range of bias. This reaffirms that a person who has a well-aligned set of party-linked identities is highly likely to feel more warmly toward their own party and to dislike social contact with common citizens who are members of the outgroup party. A person whose party-linked identities are cross-cutting will experience substantially less bias in partisan warmth and social comfort with members of the outgroup party. Importantly, the difference in the levels of bias between the sorted and unsorted will be larger than the difference in the issue polarization between the two groups. Sorting drives bias higher than it drives issue polarization.

Activism is also strongly motivated by high levels of multiple-identity sorting. A move from cross-cutting political identities to highly sorted political identities increases activism by

more than half the full range of activism, measured here as intention to volunteer or donate to a campaign or party. More importantly, the difference in activism between the sorted and unsorted is larger than the difference in issue polarization between those groups. Sorting drives levels of activism higher than it drives levels of issue polarization.

In the case of anger, the results in Figure 8.3 depict only the effect of sorting on anger in the presence of threat. An unsorted person will hear a threat to the party and feel no anger, while a sorted person will hear the same threat and feel intensely angry. The effect of moving from unsorted to highly sorted is to increase anger by about 82 percent of the total range of anger. This effect is twice as large as the effect of sorting on issue polarization.

Taken together, the results from Figure 8.3 indicate that as party-linked identities move into alignment, issue polarization does, in fact, increase. When multiple political identities are taken into account, this increase is substantial, suggesting that issue positions are, in fact, polarizing particularly among the most sorted individuals. However, the effects of sorting on the various measures of behavioral polarization are significantly larger. Therefore, as Americans become more well-sorted, their levels of bias, activism and anger are likely to increase faster than their issue polarization does, leading to a citizenry that is more biased, active and angry than can be explained by their issue positions alone.

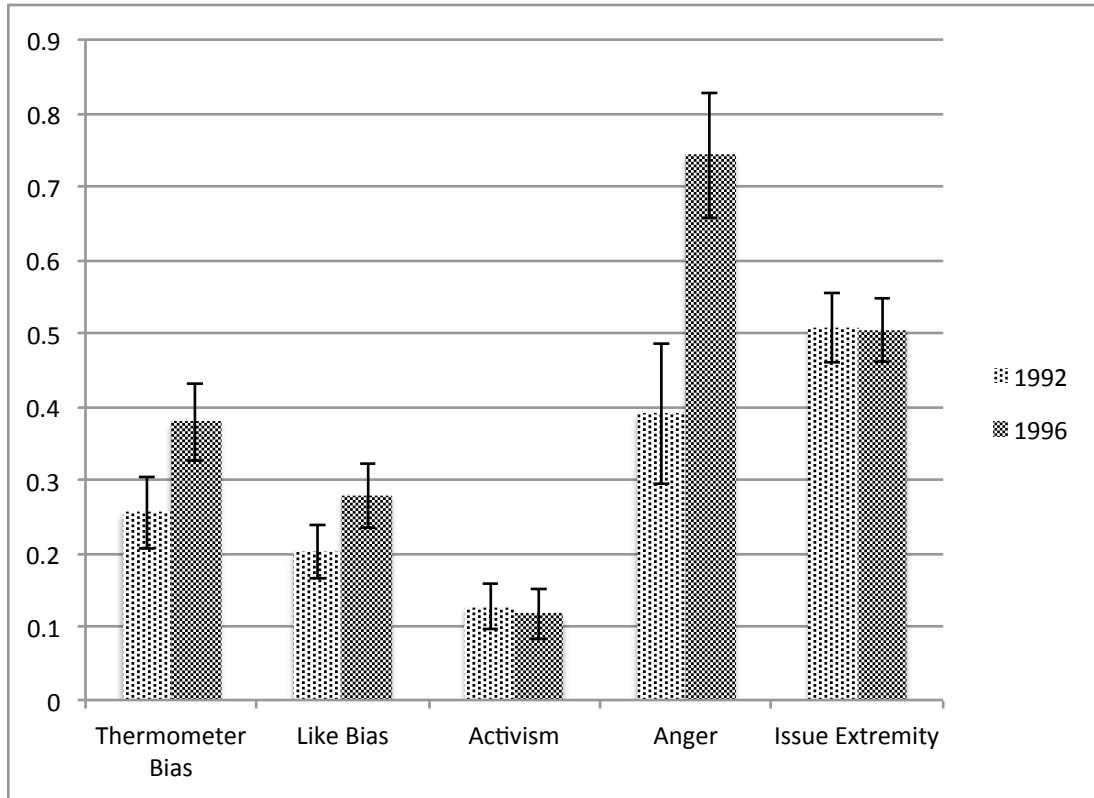
Panel data

A final examination of the differential effect of sorting on behavioral versus issue polarization is achieved by examining only those people who have sorted between 1992 and 1996, and comparing their levels of polarization pre- and post-sorting. As discussed in Chapter 4, the 1992-1996 panel was used (instead of the 2000-2004 panel) for two reasons. First, because it was a time when levels of sorting were actively changing, thus providing a rich picture of

movement, and second, because the 2000-2004 panel data set inexplicably omits the seven-point measure of ideology from one of the waves, making the measure of sorting impossible to calculate.

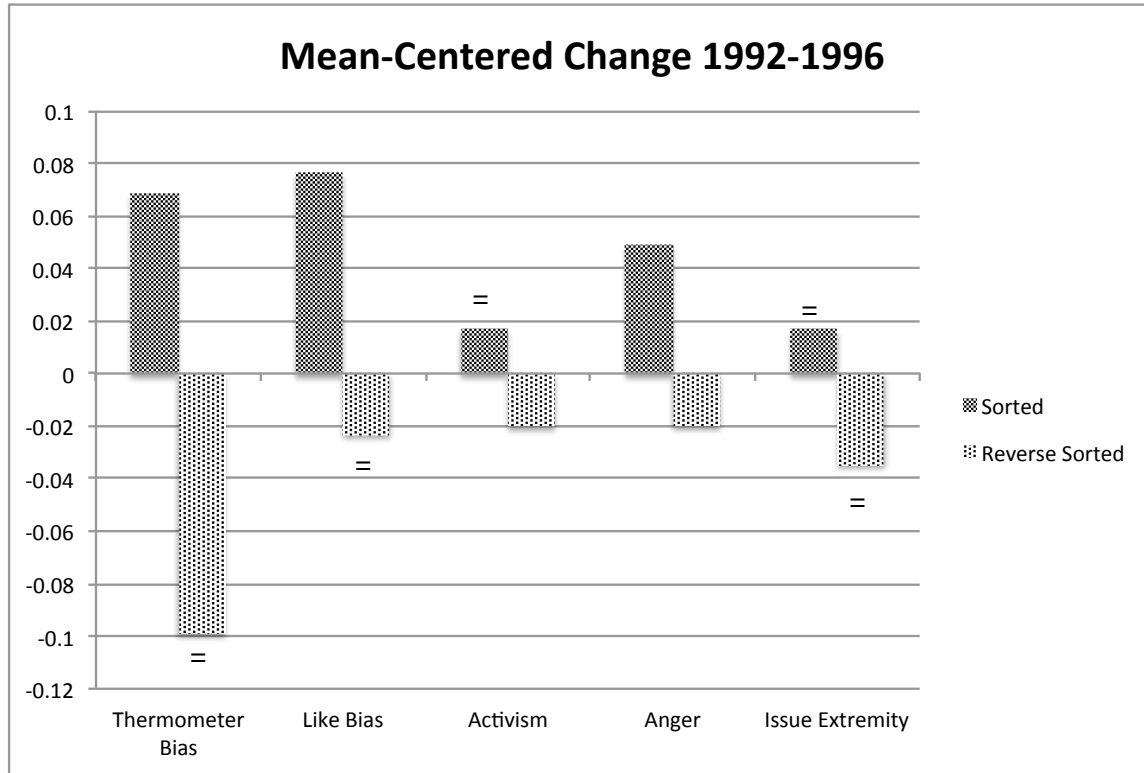
Because the panel examines the same individuals pre- and post-sorting, demographic controls are not necessary. Figure 8.4 provides the mean values of polarization in 1992 and 1996 among only the individuals whose sorting score increased between 1992 and 1996. In order to control for secular change over the four years, Figure 8.5 further presents the mean-centered differences between the 1992 and 1996 levels of each type of polarization for those who have sorted and those who have “reverse sorted” or whose sorting scores are lower in 1996 than they were in 1992.

Figure 8.4. Mean Polarization Pre-and Post-Sorting



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

Figure 8.5. Mean-centered changes in Behavioral and Issue Polarization Between 1992 and 1996, by Level of Sorting



Note: Data drawn from ANES 1992-1996 Panel data. Values represent the mean-centered difference between 1992 and 1996 levels of each type of polarization. Thus, the difference between the 1992 and 1996 values for each group, minus the difference between the 1992 and 1996 values for the sample as a whole. The Sorted sample is the same as the one presented in Figure 4. The full sample from which the mean values were drawn includes all individuals who responded to all polarization items in 1992 and 1996, or 224 individuals. The “Reverse Sorted” sample includes individuals whose sorting score decreased between 1992 and 1996, and who responded to all polarization items in 1992 and 1996, or 60 individuals. **Bars marked with an = sign are not significant differences in the raw mean scores for that group between 1992 and 1996.**

The effect of sorting in Figures 8.4 and 8.5 is similar to the effects seen above. In Figure 8.4, thermometer bias pre-sorting has a mean value of .26, increasing to .38 after sorting, a significant difference among the same people at different points in time. Furthermore, Figure 8.5 demonstrates that this change is 7 percent larger than the average change in thermometer bias across the entire sample. In comparison, those whose sorting scores decreased between 1992 and 1996 did not experience any significant change in thermometer bias, even though their small reduction in thermometer bias is quite different from the population as a whole, who saw thermometer bias increase, on average.

Like bias in Figure 8.4 increases from .20 to .28 after the sorting process. Again, after sorting the same people have found more things to like about their ingroup party and/or more things to dislike about their outgroup party. In addition, Figure 8.5 shows that this change among the increasingly sorted respondents is nearly 8 percent greater than the increase in like bias seen in the nation as a whole. In comparison, among people whose level of sorting decreased, levels of like bias did not decrease significantly, but they did decrease more than the like bias in the nation as a whole.

In Figure 8.4, activism does not significantly change after the sorting process. It should be noted that the effects of sorting on activism are significantly stronger when the multiple-identity-based measure of sorting is used in Figure 8.3. However, Figure 8.5 suggests that an increasing level of activism among the most sorted would be a particularly difficult test between 1992 and 1996, when the sample as a whole saw levels of activism decline. The nonexistent change in activism seen among the increasingly sorted respondents is nearly 2 percent larger than the change in activism seen in the population as a whole. In fact, a significant decline in activism is seen among those whose sorting levels have declined. Among those reverse-sorted

individuals, activism decreases by 5 percent of the range of activism, 2 percent more than the decrease in the population as a whole. In this particular time period when the activism of the general population is decreasing, increasingly sorted individuals are not becoming less active, while those who are reverse sorting are seeing an even larger decline in activism.

Anger at the outgroup candidate increases substantially in Figure 8.4, moving from .39 among less-sorted respondents in 1992 to .74 after sorting. This is the largest effect observed in Figure 8.4, but Figure 8.5 suggests that this effect is partly due to contextual factors. Among increasingly sorted respondents, anger increases by 35 percent of the total range of anger between 1992 and 1996. However, this is only 5 percent more than the increase in the nation as a whole. The entire population became increasingly angry between 1992 and 1996. Even those who became less sorted during that period of time grew more angry. This increase was 2 percent less than the increase for the nation as a whole, but it appears that 1996 was an angry year. This result suggests that between 1992 and 1996, sorting had a significant effect on feelings of anger at the outgroup candidate, but there was also a candidate-specific contextual change occurring as well.

In general, after a single individual's partisan and ideological identities move into alignment, that person becomes more biased, active and angry, not only more than they were before they sorted, but to an extent that is greater than what is occurring among average citizens. In contrast, issue polarization among these increasingly-sorted individuals does not significantly increase in Figure 8.4. Furthermore, unlike in the case of activism, a person who becomes *less* sorted does not experience a significant reduction in issue position extremity, as seen in Figure 8.5. There is no significant difference in issue extremity observed between 1992 and 1996 regardless of the level of sorting. In the sample as a whole, issue extremity did not significantly

change during this period, though it did slightly decline. Among those whose identities became increasingly sorted, issue extremity did not significantly change, and it also did not change among those whose identities became increasingly unsorted. In general, those who sorted saw a slightly smaller decrease in issue extremity than the general public, and those who reverse-sorted saw a slightly larger decrease in issue extremity than the general public, but none of these changes is significant within each group.

As figures 8.4 and 8.5 demonstrate, the effect of sorting on behavioral polarization is larger than its effect on issue position extremity. The results presented in this chapter suggest that as people become more sorted, their levels of issue extremity do increase, but their levels of partisan bias, activism and anger increase substantially more.

Conclusions

This chapter provides some final insight into the results of the political sorting that has been observed during recent decades. While the previous chapters demonstrate that behavioral polarization can be separated from issue polarization, and that it is possible for behavioral polarization to increase when issue polarization remains constant, this chapter allows issue polarization to move in order to examine the relative effects of sorting on both types of polarization. The results presented here provide strong evidence that sorting is capable of driving real behavioral and emotional effects in the American electorate, and that it does so to a greater extent than it drives issue extremity.

As various social identities have lined up neatly behind our political parties, this alignment has caused citizens to grow more biased against each other, more active to defend their parties and more angry in response to the partisan threats they hear on a regular basis. This alignment has also caused citizens, in general, to hold increasingly extreme issue positions.

However, the effects of sorting on behavior and issue positions are not equivalent. Sorting is capable of driving behavioral polarization more powerfully than it drives issue polarization.

Sorting is thus acting as an outside force on political behavior, unhinged from a logical assessment of the relative issue positions of the two parties. The effects of sorting on behavior are largely psychological. The first imperative of a social identity, to maintain a positive group identity relative to the outgroup, motivates sorted partisans to develop a rosier view of their own side than may be true in reality. The more identities that line up behind the party, the more important it is that the party be seen as the best, because damage to the positive status of the party can damage all the attached identities. When the status of the party is under threat from an election, well-sorted partisans are driven to take action to help the party win, because the status of not only the party, but all of the groups that have lined up behind the party, depends on victory. When a sorted partisan hears or reads a message that insults the party, or simply suggests that it is not the best party, they respond with anger, because it is human nature to feel aggressive emotions when your group, the one you know to be the best, is under threat. And when many of the groups you belong to are threatened at once from one partisan threat, the levels of anger are explosive.

These effects are natural psychological reactions to being part of a social group that is aligned with other social groups. These are effects that have been demonstrated to exist outside of politics. But only in politics do we suggest that the interactions between two groups can be mostly instrumental, essentially transactional. When the electorate is assumed to be politically motivated only by the extremity and importance of their issue positions, a large part of the story of American polarization is lost. A bimodal distribution of opinions is not a fair or full definition of polarization, certainly not as America is experiencing polarization today. Americans are

polarized because they are taking sides, and the psychological and emotional distance between the two sides is growing. Issue positions may be growing somewhat more polarized, but that is not either the cause or the main result of the increasingly isolated teams that the political parties have become. In a sense, the issue positions of the electorate are merely along for the ride. The alignment of our partisan identities with other social identities has led to an electorate that is more biased, active and angry than their issue positions alone can explain.

Behavioral polarization is increasing more quickly than issue polarization because bias, activism and anger are more powerfully motivated by sorting than issue positions are. Political scientists looking for answers only in issue positions will likely see movement, and evidence of increases in issue polarization, but still find it possible to argue that the issue polarization that is occurring is not enough to indicate a divided electorate. The changes in issue polarization are not sufficient to explain why American politics *feel* so polarized. The answer to that lies in our increasingly intense group identities that we would defend even if they had no issue content at all.

Chapter 9 – Conclusion

“It never gets better and may in fact be getting worse: the translation of all of the news and of all of Washington’s responses into a ledger of electoral pluses and minuses, a graph of rising and falling political fortunes, a narrative of competition between not just the parties but the would-be potentates within a party. On issue after issue, the sideshow swallows the substance, as politicians and the seemingly infinite ranks of political handlers join us journalists in gaming everything out, ad infinitum.”
Frank Bruni, 2013

The previous analyses have demonstrated that issue position polarization and behavioral polarization are separate phenomena in American politics. Our issue positions do not neatly match our political behavior and emotions. As social cleavages line up behind partisan cleavages, the party victory grows increasingly central to the political battle. Citizens are increasingly motivated to regard the opposing political team with bias and anger, and to work to defeat them. As our identities fall in line, we become increasingly isolated from one another, and this affects the fairness of our partisan evaluations, the intensity and ease with which we are angered, and our drive to defeat our opponents.

In determining political behavior, the substance of governing begins to matter less than which side is winning. Partisan competition is made more intense by the alignment of social identities along partisan lines. As Tajfel and Turner (1979) explained, when competition reaches its most rabid levels, partisans relate to each other primarily as partisans. Interpersonal relationships, which at one time may have softened the partisan rancor seen in government and among voters, fall to the sidelines when partisan conflict is heightened. To make matters worse, these newly aligned political identities make a reasoned discussion of issues increasingly difficult (Erisen and Erisen, 2012). This allows political behavior to be driven more by the prospect of victory, and less by a reasoned assessment of issues. The key to the divide between

political issues and behavior is the contribution of social identity, and the psychological and behavioral results of holding a set of social identities that are increasingly aligned with partisan identity.

Why Did We Sort?

The reasons for the increasing levels of sorting in the American electorate are varied, and largely outside the scope of this project. However, a quick overview is useful to put these findings in context. There are at least five theories to explain partisan-ideological sorting. One simple and concise explanation looks at the changes in the Democratic Party that occurred as a result of the civil rights movement, culminating in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. After the Democratic party took the position of supporting civil rights, conservative southern Democrats began to leave the Democratic party for the Republican party in significant numbers, leaving average Democrats more liberal and average Republicans more conservative (Bishop, 2009; Fiorina and Levendusky, 2006; Paulson, 2007).

A second argument looks at changes that occurred in the Republican Party. This argument suggests that the civil rights movement, along with the Vietnam War and the Watts riots caused such a large decline in trust in government that it encouraged citizens to detach from their parties (Bishop, 2009; Hetherington, 1998). This left them free, after a few years, to rejoin parties that had substantially changed, and the Republican Party in particular took advantage of the downswing in trust in government. The formerly unaffiliated religious right found common cause with libertarians and pro-business Republicans, advocating for smaller government. These changes allowed these groups to align their social, religious and ideological identities behind a single Republican identity, increasing the amount of sorting in the nation as a whole (Bishop, 2009; Legee, 1992; Schnabel, 2013).

A third explanation is that the decline in trust in government seen in the 1960s was accompanied by a decline in trust in all institutions, not just government, the result of which was a decline in all civic engagement (Bishop, 2009; Burnham, 1982; Putnam, 2000). This lack of civic engagement led Americans to seek comfort in increasingly homogeneous neighborhoods, towns, and churches, causing American citizens to sort themselves into geographically-isolated groups that share their culture, values and politics. In this view, the American electorate sorted itself (Bishop, 2009).

A fourth explanation argues the opposite. Specifically, polarization among the political elites occurred first (McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal, 2008), and thus provided clearer partisan and ideological cues to the electorate (Saunders and Abramowitz, 2004). The public then assumed more consistent partisan and ideological positions due to these increasingly simple cues – although this argument frequently includes the caveat that this elite *issue* polarization has not trickled down to the level of the average voter, only the sorting itself (Fiorina and Levendusky, 2006; Levendusky, 2009).

A fifth explanation suggests that an increase in media choice and thus the potential for choosing only party-supportive political information has made it easier for Americans to learn which party is liberal and which is conservative, and to bring their own partisan and ideological identities into accord (Levendusky, 2009).

Other types of partisan sorting have been examined as well. One examination of partisan-religious sorting argues that religion-linked issues (such as abortion and gay marriage) that once cut across the partisan divide began to line up more neatly behind the parties as strategic politicians and passionate activists advocated for it. This religious/non-religious gap between the parties then grew as their activist bases responded to the new cultural gap between the parties,

leading candidates to take more extreme positions on these issues, and thus changing the public perceptions of the two parties. Once the public was aware of a religious divide between the parties, the electoral composition of the two parties changed, divided by cultural and religion-linked issues (Layman, 2001).

In terms of partisan-racial sorting, in addition to the well known support of the Democratic party by black voters over racial issues (Mangum, 2013) work by Giles and Hertz (1994) demonstrate that between 1975 and 1990, higher concentrations of black voters in parishes in Louisiana were associated with declines in the number of white voters who were registered as Democrats. This work supports the expectations of power theory, which views relationships between groups as a function of their level of competition. In other words, in places where there are larger numbers of black voters, usually voting for a Democrat, white voters have, over time, reacted against this by aligning themselves with the Republican party. Thus partisan-racial sorting was not simply a movement of black voters toward the Democratic party, but also a movement of white voters toward the Republican party. Furthermore, Mangum (2013) has found that party identity is now strongly predicted by racial identity, not racial issue positions.

It is likely that the true reason that Americans have sorted is some combination of all of the theories presented above. Concrete changes in the platforms of the two parties have led to increasingly polarized elites and clearer cues for the electorate, and the electorate has also been finding increasingly homogeneous places to live and work, lining up their ingroups into increasingly isolated tribes. The news media allow for even more informational isolation, permitting voters to hear only the arguments of their own side, causing them to become increasingly consistent in understanding whose team they are on, and which other teams are on

their side. Religious activists have encouraged an alignment of religion and party, and found an enthusiastic electorate waiting for just such a pairing. The black-white party divide has only grown as the parties have become more clearly distinct on racial issues, and over time that issue divide has evolved into racial identity-based partisan sorting. In any case, it is unlikely that levels of bias, activism and anger have sprung unformed from the electorate and caused sorting themselves, rather than the other way around. The sorting of the electorate into increasingly isolated collections of social groups, lined up behind political parties, has had significant ramifications for the state of American political behavior.

The Contributions of this Study

The findings presented here make a number of important contributions to the study of political polarization. First, by identifying political behavior as a relevant arena for the examination of polarization, separate from issue position polarization, this paper provides a toehold from which to look theoretically at whether polarization is occurring, and what we mean by polarization. As demonstrated in Chapter 5, issue position polarization is not synonymous with behavioral polarization. They can occur independently of each other, which suggests that when we discuss polarization, it should never be assumed that issue position polarization tells the whole story. Behavioral polarization affects political interactions and a person's understanding of the political world, as well as the vehemence with which they react emotionally to political events.

Second, this research specifies two mechanisms by which behavioral polarization is driven – political identity strength and alignment. Contrary to an issue-focused view of political decision-making and behavior, the results presented here suggest that political behavior is powerfully driven by political identities. The strength of a person's identification with his or her

party affects how biased, active and angry that person is, even if that person's issue positions are moderate. Furthermore, when partisan and other social identities move into alignment, that alignment is capable of motivating even more bias, activism and anger. Thus political identities are able to motivate behavioral polarization in two ways – through the effects of partisanship and through the effects of identity alignment. Even if political issue positions are generally moderate, people may still be strongly biased against each other, active in defense of their party, and full of anger if they have strong or strongly aligned political identities.

Third, this research provides some insight into the results of the political sorting that has been observed during recent decades. It has been widely reported that party is falling increasingly into line with ideology, race, religion, and movements like the Tea Party, but the consequences of these new alignments haven't been thoroughly explored. This research lays out one very important consequence of that sorting: the intensification of partisan bias, activism and anger. The effects of sorting on bias and anger are stronger than its effects on activism, consistent with the identity alignment literature that predicts direct effects of sorting on bias and anger, and only indirect effects on activism, via partisan identity. However, on balance, the effects of sorting on activism are still stronger than its effects on issue extremity, leading to an electorate that is more biased, active and angry than their issue positions alone would explain.

Finally, these results challenge the view that people are purely logical political decision-makers, choosing a party and deciding how strongly to support it based solely on each party's stated positions and whether the party shares interests with them. If this were the case, the results presented above would have shown far stronger effects of issue position extremity on behavioral polarization. If issues are the most important element in the political arena, the extremity and importance of issue positions should determine the intensity of bias, activism and

anger observed among citizens. But this is not what occurs. In fact, issue position strength has some effect on those behaviors, but these effects are not nearly as strong as the effects of identity and identity alignment. In contrast to issue positions, which should be logically linked to political behavior, identity is simply a group attachment. It does not necessarily have logical content behind it. Social identities can be acquired through socialization, psychological predispositions, evaluations of threat, or even experimental assignment. The psychological and emotional sense of attachment to a party, ideology, religion, race or other political subgroup, and the extent to which those attachments overlap, is capable of driving behavioral polarization, even when the presumptive reasons for choosing a party- issue positions- are held constant. When issue positions are free to vary in response to these group attachments, a well-aligned set of social identities is capable of driving behavioral polarization more powerfully than it drives issue polarization. The result is a population of partisans who do disagree on issues, but are more biased against each other, socially uncomfortable around each other, angry at each other and motivated to defeat each other than the extremity of those issue disagreements would indicate.

Limitations of the Research

These results have allowed for a more precise understanding of the dynamics between political identities, political issues and behavior. One major source of this increased precision is drawn from the conception of partisanship as a social identity. However, this is also a weakness in many of the analyses presented here, specifically those conducted using ANES data. Simply labeling partisanship as a social identity is far from measuring it as such. In general, social identities should be measured using multiple items that assess the wide range of potential degrees of identification with a group, from an intentionally social perspective. Work done by Mason, Huddy and Aaroe (2010) has found that when partisanship is measured as a social identity, it is a

significantly more powerful predictor of political behavior than the traditional measure of partisanship found in the ANES. The work presented here relies heavily on ANES data, and therefore on measures of partisan identity that are underpowered and possibly misleading. The traditional scale used in the ANES, when used to measure the strength of partisan identification, has four points at best (strong, weak, lean, independent). However, this scale may not even be consistently ordinal, some independent leaners have been found to be more strongly partisan than weak identifiers (Petrocik, 1974). Thus the ANES measure introduces a large amount of noise and a lack of precision into the models looking at partisan identity.

Furthermore, the ANES measure of ideological identity suffers from the same problems, but adds to that the major problem that many respondents do not provide an answer to the ideology item. As discussed in Chapter 4 (footnote 2), the imputation of the ideological identity item generally requires the use of the partisanship variable, which is not possible here due to the importance of correctly gauging the relationship between partisanship and ideology, not using one to create the other. The lack of ideological identity data directly limits the measure of sorting that is available in the ANES models, as sorting requires both a partisan identity and an ideological identity score to be calculated. The models that use ANES data are therefore limited to those respondents in the sample who are sophisticated or politically aware enough to know what end of the ideological spectrum they feel part of. Therefore, not only are the ANES results weakened by imprecise measures of partisan and ideological identity, they are also presenting a skewed sample that is likely to be more politically aware than those respondents who are treated as missing. However, even in this truncated sample, the majority of the sample falls below the .5 value in the 0 to 1 sorting score, suggesting that there may actually be a floor effect in the sorting

scale. Furthermore, the ANES measures of religious and racial identities are generally dichotomous, making it difficult to include them in a measure of sorting.

I believe that these limitations provide a conservative test of the hypotheses examined here, in that the full range of sorting is not available, minimizing the full effects of moving from least sorted to most sorted, and the full range of partisan and ideological identities are not available, adding noise and removing power from the models presented here. Ideally, the ANES data would include a more social-identity-oriented measure of both partisan and ideological identity, as well as social-identity-oriented measures of religion and race, assessing a feeling of belonging rather than simply a yes-or-no indication of membership.

The Polimetrix data go a long way toward addressing the shortcomings of the partisan and other identity measures in the ANES data, by measuring all identities using a social identity-based scale of items. This allows for a consistent and complex measure of the commitment to the group for party, ideology, race, religion and tea party movement. These more complex scales, when combined, allow for a more robust measure of the alignment of multiple social identities along partisan lines. Predictably, the results obtained from the Polimetrix data demonstrate a stronger relationship between sorting and behavioral polarization than the ANES data offer.

However, the Polimetrix data are drawn from a single point in time, November of 2011. This particular time point is not truly comparable with any data from the ANES, as it falls exactly between congressional elections. The ANES does not run full surveys in electoral off-years. This data, therefore, could also be considered to represent a conservative estimate of the true effect of identity sorting on behavior. This is because the partisan threats present in the general political environment of the respondents are likely to be far more prevalent during an

election year, and at their nadir at the midpoint between two congressional elections. As demonstrated above, the interaction between sorting and threat has a powerful effect on behavioral polarization. In a non-election year, at a point in time that is truly as far as one can get from electoral competition (in either temporal direction), the Polimetrix data should represent a baseline of the potential effects of sorting on behavior and issue positions. This survey has assessed respondents at their least threatened, and therefore least partisan moments. Even so, they do demonstrate a significant amount of partisan behavior that suggests that the most sorted among them are still significantly polarized in their interparty behavior.

Ideally, the Polimetrix survey would have been replicated during an election year. This would have made it more comparable with the ANES data. The measures of social identity would remain quite different, but in the same year even this difference would have been more quantifiable. Furthermore, although I expect that the lower threat environment of an electoral off-year would reduce the effect of the threat manipulation on behavioral polarization, it is possible that in a heightened partisan threat environment experimental manipulations are *less* effective. Instead of raising the total threat level, an increased threat environment might cause respondents to grow accustomed to partisan threat, and respond with lower reactivity. Without an election year replication of the survey, this is impossible to determine.

Finally, the Polimetrix data did not assess levels of anger from the control group who did not receive any message at all. Thus, the control group was effectively non-existent for the purposes of assessing angry reactions to threat. Ideally, the control group would have read a non-political message and reported feelings of anger, in order to create a baseline level of anger against which to compare the threatened partisans. Due to this omission, levels of anger in response to threat were compared against levels of anger in response to supportive messages,

rather than a baseline level. This was not an ideal test of the effect of threat and partisan sorting on anger.

Directions for Future Research

This project has gone a long way toward examining the behavioral and psychological effects of partisan sorting in the electorate. In particular, it has aimed to show a greater effect of sorting on political behavior and emotion than on political issue positions, and has presented evidence to support that claim. However, one of the major questions that remains unanswered at the end of this study is a more precise look at how sorting does affect issue positions. As discussed in Chapter 8, sorting does not have *no* effect on issue positions, it simply has a weaker effect on issues than it has on political behavior. But sorting does affect issue position extremity and importance. Future research is required to determine the theoretical mechanism behind this influence. A few possibilities are immediately apparent.

First, while this project focused on the *what* element of the polarization debate, the *who* element is likely to provide further insight into the relationship between sorting and the two types of polarization. For instance, there is likely an interactive effect between sophistication and sorting on issue position polarization. Those citizens who are most sorted and most sophisticated are likely to know and understand the appropriate issue positions for their political group better than those who are sorted and unsophisticated. On the other hand, low-sophistication voters are more likely to rely on partisan cues in forming issue positions (Kam, 2005), and may therefore be more reliably party-consistent in their issue attitudes. Furthermore, it is possible that sorting is capable of increasing political sophistication, by increasing interest in partisan outcomes. A more thorough examination of the role of sophistication is an important next step.

Second, media exposure and media homogeneity likely interact with sorting to increase issue position polarization. The more a conservative Republican or liberal Democrat consumes group-supported media, the more s/he is likely to bring his/her issue positions into alignment with the group norm.

Third, Mackie (1986) and Mackie and Cooper (1984) have found that when in-group members espouse extreme issue positions, members of the social group follow the group norm and similarly polarize their own issue positions. Furthermore, when group membership is salient, group members perceive their group norms as more extreme, and in conformity with those expected extreme norms, group members take on more polarized attitudes. This research has been used to support the reference group theory of partisan identification (Jacoby, 1988), suggesting that people take on the positions of the party with which they identify, and the stronger the partisanship, the more consistently they take on those positions. More recently, Goren, Federico and Kittilson (2009) have found that not only are strong partisans more consistent in their issue positions, but they are more extreme in their issue positions. Furthermore, they find that as party and ideology become more aligned, issue positions grow even more extreme, via the effects of partisan bias. This research suggests that sorting may have an effect on issue extremity in two ways. First, via partisan strength, and second, via the ingroup bias that results from a highly sorted set of identities. This indirect relationship may explain why sorting has a smaller effect on issue positions than it does on its primary outgrowths - partisan strength and ingroup bias. It would be instructive to examine the existence of these two pathways using social-identity-based measures of a wider array of party-linked social identities.

Finally, Bliuc, McGarty, Reynolds and Muntele (2007) suggest that some issues may generate social groups around them, thus creating an issue-based social identity that is capable of

driving social action. By this logic, these opinion-based identities should be capable of motivating behavior in the same way as any other social identity, particularly when it aligns with party or other social groups. Further investigation is necessary into which types of issues generate these social identities and whether they are capable of motivating other types of behavioral polarization.

Concluding Remarks

The cross-cutting cleavages that were so commonplace in political science literature decades ago have been replaced by a set of social cleavages that have increasingly lined up behind party identities. As these cleavages have moved into alignment, the political divide between average Americans has grown, causing not simply logical disagreements, but outsized levels of anger, activism, and perceptual and social bias against outgroup partisans. As American social identities line up behind our political parties, we are psychologically motivated to distrust, dislike and attempt to defeat the other team, regardless of whether we agree with them. The otherness of the opposing party is compounded with every additional social cleavage that lines up with partisanship, making compromise increasingly undesirable.

The distinction between the effects of sorting on issue and behavioral polarization is an important one. Without an understanding that political battles can be waged on substantially psychological turf, attempts to address polarization via issue arguments will be fruitless. It may be normatively unsettling to imagine a nation of people driven powerfully by team spirit, and less powerfully by a logical connection of issues to action. The results presented here, however, suggest that as our social identities fall increasingly into alignment with our partisanship, the result is a nation that is more bitterly divided than its issue positions alone are able to explain.

As citizens, pundits and even politicians call out for more issue-based substantive governing and reasoned political argument, their attention is repeatedly drawn back to the key outcome of group-based competition: which team wins. The more divided the partisans of both sides become, the more socially distant from each other they become, the more intense the conflict between them will be. And as the conflict increases, the more they will relate to each other not as Americans or individuals, but as partisans, interested not in what is best for the country as a whole, but instead in who won the last contest and who will win the next one. The sideshow of political gamesmanship becomes the substance of politics in a highly sorted political environment.

Sorting is therefore not simply a realignment or reassignment of liberals and conservatives to the “correct” parties. Sorting is capable of altering the motivations behind political behavior and emotion, separating political beliefs from political action, and whipping up unreasoned, psychologically reactionary political behavior. The current levels of polarization in American politics are therefore unlikely to diminish unless a new and powerful cross-cutting cleavage emerges in the American electorate. A new cleavage would give today’s political enemies the opportunity to be occasional allies, potentially restoring their relationship as mere opponents, and more importantly reducing the perceived differences between the two groups, opening up a space for compromise and tolerance. Until that happens, the current trend of increasingly aligned social identities will fuel a partisan divide marked by bias, activism and anger, even when the two sides can agree.

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Appendix 4.1 - ANES Partisan-Ideological Sorting Categories

Organized from least to most sorted. Groupings in the same category receive the same sorting score.

		n
1	Moderate/Independent	407
2	Moderate/Lean Dem	518
	Moderate/Lean Rep	373
3	Lean Cons/Independent	407
	Lean Lib/Independent	57
	Moderate/Weak Dem	761
	Moderate/Weak Rep	473
4	Weak Lib/Independent	57
	Weak Cons/Independent	407
	Moderate/Strong Dem	534
	Moderate/Strong Rep	210
5	Strong Lib/Strong Rep	3
	Strong Lib/Independent	20
	Strong Cons/Strong Dem	36
	Strong Cons/Independent	19
6	Lean Lib/Lean Rep	105
	Lean Cons/Lean Dem	155
7	Strong Lib/Lean Rep	7
	Strong Lib/Weak Rep	5
	Weak Lib/Lean Rep	35
	Weak Lib/Strong Rep	31
8	Lean Cons/Strong Dem	148
	Lean Cons/Weak Dem	322
	Weak Cons/Strong Dem	159
	Weak Cons/Lean Dem	144
	Strong Cons/Weak Dem	26
	Strong Cons/Lean Dem	15
9	Weak Lib/Weak Rep	33
	Weak Cons/Weak Dem	144
10	Lean Lib/Lean Dem	304
	Lean Cons/Lean Rep	364
11	Weak Lib/Lean Dem	215
	Lean Lib/Weak Dem	352
	Lean Cons/Weak Rep	500
	Weak Cons/Lean Rep	303
12	Strong Lib/Lean Dem	62
	Lean Lib/Strong Dem	297
	Lean Cons/Strong Rep	297
13	Strong Cons/Lean Rep	36
	Weak Lib/Weak Dem	205
14	Weak Cons/Weak Rep	363
	Strong Lib/Weak Dem	39
	Weak Lib/Strong Dem	372
15	Weak Cons/Strong Rep	680
	Strong Cons/Weak Rep	40
16	Strong Lib/Strong Dem	79
	Strong Cons/Strong Rep	128

Appendix 4.2 Exact item wordings:

IDENTITY:

Ideology:

How important is being Liberal/Conservative to you?

Extremely important

Very important

Not very important

Not important at all

How well does the term Liberal/Conservative describe you?

Extremely well

Very well

Not very well

Not at all

When talking about Liberals/Conservatives how often do you use “we” instead of “they”?

All of the time

Most of the time

Some of the time

Rarely

Never

To what extent do you think of yourself as being a Liberal/Conservative ?

A great deal

Somewhat

Very Little

Not at all

Party:

How important is being a Democrat/Republican to you?

Extremely important

Very important

Not very important

Not important at all

How well does the term Democrat/Republican describe you?

Extremely well

Very well

Not very well

Not at all

When talking about Democrats/Republicans how often do you use “we” instead of “they”?

All of the time

Most of the time

Some of the time
Rarely
Never

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

A great deal
Somewhat
Very Little
Not at all

Evangelical:

Would you consider yourself to be an Evangelical Christian?

Yes
No

If yes, answer the next 5 items.

How important is being an Evangelical Christian to you?

Extremely important
Very important
Not very important
Not important at all

How well does the term Evangelical Christian describe you?

Extremely well
Very well
Not very well
Not at all

When talking about Evangelical Christians how often do you use “we” instead of “they”?

All of the time
Most of the time
Some of the time
Rarely
Never

To what extent do you think of yourself as being an Evangelical Christian ?

A great deal
Somewhat
Very Little
Not at all

Secular:

When it comes to religion, would you consider yourself to be a secular person?

Yes

No

If yes, answer the next 5 items.

How important is being secular to you?

Extremely important

Very important

Not very important

Not important at all

How well does the term secular describe you?

Extremely well

Very well

Not very well

Not at all

When talking about secular people how often do you use “we” instead of “they”?

All of the time

Most of the time

Some of the time

Rarely

Never

To what extent do you think of yourself as being a secular person ?

A great deal

Somewhat

Very Little

Not at all

Black:

How important is being Black to you?

Extremely important

Very important

Not very important

Not important at all

How well does the term Black describe you?

Extremely well

Very well

Not very well

Not at all

When talking about Black people how often do you use “we” instead of “they”?

All of the time

Most of the time

Some of the time

Rarely

Never

To what extent do you think of yourself as being a Black person ?

A great deal

Somewhat

Very Little

Not at all

Tea Party:

To what extent do you consider yourself to be a Tea Party supporter or opponent?

Strong Tea Party supporter

Moderate Tea Party supporter

Weak Tea Party supporter

No opinion about the Tea Party

Weak Tea Party opponent

Moderate Tea Party opponent

Strong Tea Party opponent

If score 1-3, answer the next 5 items.

How important is being a Tea Party supporter to you?

Extremely important

Very important

Not very important

Not important at all

How well does the term Tea Party describe you?

Extremely well

Very well

Not very well

Not at all

When talking about Tea Party supporters how often do you use “we” instead of “they”?

All of the time

Most of the time

Some of the time

Rarely

Never

To what extent do you think of yourself as being a Tea Party supporter?

A great deal

Somewhat

Very Little

Not at all

ISSUE POSITIONS

Do you think the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the United States to live should be:

Increased a lot

Increase a little

Left the same

Decreased a little

Decreased a lot

Don't know

How important is this issue to you?

Very important

Somewhat important

Not very important

Not at all important

In general, do you support or oppose the health care reform law that was passed in 2010?

Strongly support

Somewhat support

Neither support or oppose

Somewhat oppose

Strongly oppose

Don't know

How important is this issue to you?

Very important

Somewhat important

Not very important

Not at all important

There has been some discussion about abortion during recent years. Which one of the opinions below best agrees with your view?

By law, abortion should never be permitted.

The law should permit abortion only in case of rape, incest, or when the woman's life is in danger.

The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or when the woman's life is in danger.

By law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice.

Don't know

How important is this issue to you?

- Very important*
- Somewhat important*
- Not very important*
- Not at all important*

In general, do you support or oppose same-sex marriage?

- Strongly support*
- Somewhat support*
- Neither*
- Somewhat oppose*
- Strongly oppose*

How important is this issue to you?

- Very important*
- Somewhat important*
- Not very important*
- Not at all important*
- Don't know*

Which is more important--reducing the federal budget deficit, even if the unemployment rate remains high, or reducing the unemployment rate, even if the federal budget deficit remains high?

- Reducing the deficit is much more important*
- Reducing the deficit is a little more important*
- Both are equally important*
- Reducing unemployment is a little more important*
- Reducing unemployment is much more important*
- Don't know*

How important is this issue to you?

- Very important*
- Somewhat important*
- Not very important*
- Not at all important*

SOCIAL DISTANCE ITEMS

Now we would like you to ask you a few questions about different types of contact with political partisans (Respondents received items for outgroup party, then ingroup party).

In each situation please state how willing you would be to engage in the activity:

Occasionally spending social time with a Republican/Democrat:

I would definitely do this

I would probably do this

I would probably not do this

I would definitely not do this

Living next-door to a Republican/Democrat?

I would definitely do this

I would probably do this

I would probably not do this

I would definitely not do this

Being very close friends with a Republican/Democrat?

I would definitely do this

I would probably do this

I would probably not do this

I would definitely not do this

Marrying a Republican/Democrat?

I would definitely do this

I would probably do this

I would probably not do this

I would definitely not do this

ACTIVISM

Future:

Between now and the 2012 election, do you intend to contribute money to any political candidates?

Yes

No

Between now and the 2012 election, do you intend to contribute money to any political organizations that support candidates or ballot issues?

Yes

No

Between now and the 2012 election, do you intend to do any volunteer work for any political candidates?

Yes

No

Between now and the 2012 election, do you intend to do any volunteer work for any political organizations that support candidates or ballot issues?

Yes

No

Past:

Have you done volunteer work for for a political candidate, political party, or any other organization that supports candidates?

Yes

No

Have you ever participated in a political protest, march, or demonstration?

Yes

No

Have you ever written a letter to your Congressman (or Congresswoman) or any other public official?

Yes

No

Have you ever contributed money to a political party or candidate?

Yes

No

EXPERIMENTAL MANIPULATIONS

ALL RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO READ ONE OF THE STATEMENTS BELOW:

Statement 1:

The following statement recently appeared on a Democratic blog:

“2012 is going to be a great election for Democrats. Obama will easily win re-election against whatever lunatic the Republicans run, we are raising more money than Republicans, our Congressional candidates are in safer seats, and Republicans have obviously lost Americans’ trust. Our current Congress is proving to Americans that Republicans do not deserve to be in the majority, and Americans will make sure they’re gone in 2012. Finally, we’ll take the Congress back and won’t have to worry about the Republicans shutting down government anymore! I’m glad that Americans have finally returned to their senses. Republicans should get used to being the minority for the foreseeable future. Democrats will hold our central place in the leadership of the country. Obama 2012!!”

Statement 2:

The following statement recently appeared on a Republican blog:

“2012 is going to be a great election for Republicans. We’re going to defeat the hardcore socialist Obama, we are raising more money than Democrats, our Congressional candidates are in safer seats, and Democrats have obviously lost Americans’ trust. Our current Congress is proving to Americans that Democrats do not deserve to be in the majority, and Americans will make sure they're gone in 2012. Finally, we’ll take the government back, and we won’t have to worry about Democrats blocking us at every turn! I am so glad that Americans have finally returned to their senses. Democrats should not get used to running the government. Republicans will take back our central place in the leadership of the country. Defeat Obama in 2012!!”

Statement 3:

The following statement recently appeared on an internet blog:

“2012 is going to be a great election for responsible political ideas. After this election we can finally fix the economy using wise tax increases to pay for our indispensable social programs and infrastructure, so that we can create jobs instead of blindly throwing money to corporations and giving tax cuts to the millionaires who caused this mess. After this election we’ll be able to improve the health care bill by adding a public option, make sure every woman has clear access to abortions, every child has a chance to learn evolutionary theory in school, and make it easier for all adults to get married if they want to, no matter who they are. Finally, our country will be on the right path again!”

Statement 4:

The following statement recently appeared on an internet blog:

“2012 is going to be a great election for responsible political ideas. After this election we can finally fix the economy by enforcing personal responsibility, using a true free-market system to make sure people aren’t handed more than they’ve earned. We’ll be able to shrink the government and get it off our backs, and lower taxes so that hard-working people have a reason to work. After this election we’ll be able to stop socialized medicine, prevent the abortions of innocent babies all over the country, bring God back into the public sphere, and make sure that we are a country that respects that marriage is between a man and a woman. Finally, our country will be on the right path again!”

Statement 5: no statement

If respondent read statements 1-4:

Please rate how you felt when reading the previous comments.

A great deal Some what Very Little Not at All

- Angry*
- Hostile*
- Nervous*
- Disgusted*
- Anxious*
- Afraid*
- Hopeful*
- Proud*
- Enthusiastic*

SOPHISTICATION

What party currently holds the majority of seats in the US House of Representatives?

- Democrats*
- Republicans*

What is the job title of John Roberts?

- Chief Justice of the United States*
- Secretary of Defense*
- Secretary of Agriculture*
- United States Attorney General*

What is the job title of Eric Holder?

- Chairman of the Federal Reserve*
- Director of Department of Homeland Security*
- United States Attorney General*
- Secretary of Health and Human Services*

What is the job title of Joe Biden?

- Vice President of the United States*
- Supreme Court Justice*
- Governor of Delaware*
- Secretary of the Interior*

What is the name of the US Secretary of State?

- Tony Blair*
- Hillary Clinton*
- Boris Johnson*
- Ben Bernanke*

Appendix 4.3: Marginal effects of political identities

The tables below include all possible configurations of political identities. For each configuration, I ran a full regression predicting the four different measures of behavioral polarization, and reported only the coefficient related to each sorting measure from each regression. This helps to see the marginal effects of the addition of each identity scale.

Coefficients are organized from smallest to largest for each dependent variable. Party identity, party and ideology sorting, and the full identity sorting measure are in bold for ease of interpretation.

The case of Thermometer Bias is an odd one, where the effect of party alone is stronger than the combined effect of party and a number of other identities. In particular, it appears that the effect of Evangelical identity is suppressing the effect of party on thermometer bias, rather than reinforcing it. Accordingly, the effect of party and ideology is essentially indistinguishable from the effect of the full sorting measure.

In the remaining measures of behavioral polarization, the effect of party alone can be marginally strengthened by adding various combinations of other identities. In the case of social distance bias and activism, the effect of party and ideology alone is surpassed by the combination of party and certain configurations of other political identities.

	Thermometer Bias - low to high
Party, Evangelical, Black, Tea Party	.29(.07)
Party, Evangelical, Tea Party	.29(.07)
Party, Secular, Evangelical	.31(.05)
Party and Evangelical	.32(.06)
Party, Evangelical, Black	.32(.06)
Party and Secular	.38(.07)
Party, Secular, Evangelical, Black, Tea Party	.38(.08)
Party, Black, Tea Party	.42(.07)
Party, Tea Party, Secular	.42(.07)
Party	.43(.04)
Party and Tea Party	.45(.07)
Party, Secular, Evangelical, Black	.48(.09)
Full Sorting Measure including Ideology	.54(.09)
Party, Black, Secular	.54(.10)
Party and Ideology	.55(.07)
Party and Black	.88(.13)

	Social Distance Bias - low to high
Party and Secular	.27(.06)
Party, Secular, Evangelical	.29(.06)
Party	.31(.04)
Party and Evangelical	.32(.07)
Party, Evangelical, Black	.35(.07)
Party, Evangelical, Tea Party	.36(.08)
Party, Evangelical, Black, Tea Party	.39(.08)
Party and Ideology	.40(.07)
Party, Tea Party, Secular	.40(.07)
Party, Black, Secular	.42(.09)
Party, Black, Tea Party	.45(.07)
Party and Tea Party	.46(.08)
Party, Secular, Evangelical, Black, Tea Party	.47(.09)
Party, Secular, Evangelical, Black	.49(.09)
Full Sorting Measure including Ideology	.56(.10)
Party and Black	.69(.10)

	Activism
Party and Secular	.19(.07)
Party, Secular, Evangelical	.20(.06)
Party, Evangelical, Black	.24(.06)
Party and Evangelical	.25 (.07)
Party	.26(.05)
Party, Black, Secular	.28(.11)
Party, Evangelical, Tea Party	.29(.08)
Party, Evangelical, Black, Tea Party	.29(.08)
Party and Ideology	.31(.06)
Party, Secular, Evangelical, Black	.31(.10)
Party, Tea Party, Secular	.33(.07)
Party, Secular, Evangelical, Black, Tea Party	.33(.08)
Party, Black, Tea Party	.35(.07)
Party and Tea Party	.39(.07)
Full Sorting Measure including Ideology	.40(.09)
Party and Black	.51(.11)

	Anger (interactive term)
Party and Black	-.03(.18)
Party, Black, Secular	-.09(.20)
Party and Secular	.13(.14)
Party	.24(.09)
Party, Evangelical, Black	.32(.12)
Party, Secular, Evangelical, Black	.34(.17)
Party, Secular, Evangelical	.37(.11)
Party, Black, Tea Party	.46(.13)
Party and Evangelical	.52(.12)
Party, Tea Party, Secular	.59(.12)
Party, Secular, Evangelical, Black, Tea Party	.64(.15)
Party, Evangelical, Black, Tea Party	.64(.15)
Party and Tea Party	.76(.13)
Party, Evangelical, Tea Party	.77(.14)
Party and Ideology	.77(.13)
Full Sorting Measure including Ideology	.99(.17)

Appendix 6.1 Originating regressions for Chapter 6

Table A6.1. Originating regressions for Chapter 6 Figure 2

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

Appendix 7.1 Originating regressions for Chapter 7 Figures 1-4

Note: Bold coefficients significant at the .05 level in a one-tailed test. Coefficients for partisan identity and sorting are related by construction, so cannot be directly compared in these models. Predicted values deal with this issue by examining exact values of the two variables.

Table A7.1. Originating regression for Chapter 7 Figure 1

	Thermometer Bias
Partisan Identity	0.39 (.05)
Political Identity Sorting	0.19 (.10)
Issue Polarization	0.19 (.06)
Sophistication	0.15 (.05)
White	0.01 (.04)
Hispanic	0.03 (.04)
Black	-0.01 (.05)
Male	-0.04 (.02)
Income	0.00 (.00)
Age	0.01 (.01)
Church Attendance	0.04 (.03)
Constant	-0.14 (.08)
n	721
R-squared	0.23

Table A7.2. Originating regression for Chapter 7 Figure 2

	Social Distance Bias
Partisan Identity	0.22 (.05)
Political Identity Sorting	0.36 (.12)
Issue Polarization	0.24 (.06)
Sophistication	-0.01 (.05)
White	0.04 (.04)
Hispanic	0.08 (.04)
Black	0.12 (.05)
Male	0.00 (.02)
Income	-0.01 (.00)
Age	0.00 (.01)
Church Attendance	0.06 (.03)
Constant	-0.29 (.07)
n	721
R-squared	0.17

Table A7.3. Originating regression for Chapter 7 Figure 3

	Activism
Partisan Identity	0.21 (.05)
Political Identity Sorting	0.17 (.10)
Past Activism	0.63 (.04)
Issue Polarization	-0.02 (.06)
Sophistication	0.07 (.05)
White	-0.05 (.04)
Hispanic	0.05 (.05)
Black	0.05 (.05)
Male	0.07 (.02)
Income	0.01 (.00)
Age	0.00 (.01)
Church Attendance	-0.01 (.03)
Constant	-0.33 (.08)
n	722
R-squared	0.47

Table A7.4. Originating regression for Chapter 7 Figure 4

	Anger
Partisan Identity	0.13 (.07)
Political Identity Sorting	-0.65 (.15)
Issue Polarization	0.00 (.08)
Threat	-0.23 (.11)
ThreatXIdentity	-0.07 (.11)
ThreatXSorting	0.87 (.21)
ThreatXIssues	0.36 (.12)
Sophistication	0.14 (.05)
White	0.06 (.04)
Hispanic	0.05 (.05)
Black	-0.14 (.05)
Male	0.02 (.02)
Income	0.00 (.00)
Age	0.01 (.01)
Church Attendance	-0.03 (.03)
Constant	0.32 (.09)
n	690
R-squared	0.51

Appendix 8.1- Originating regressions for Chapter 8

Table A8.1. Originating regressions for Chapter 8 Figure 2

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

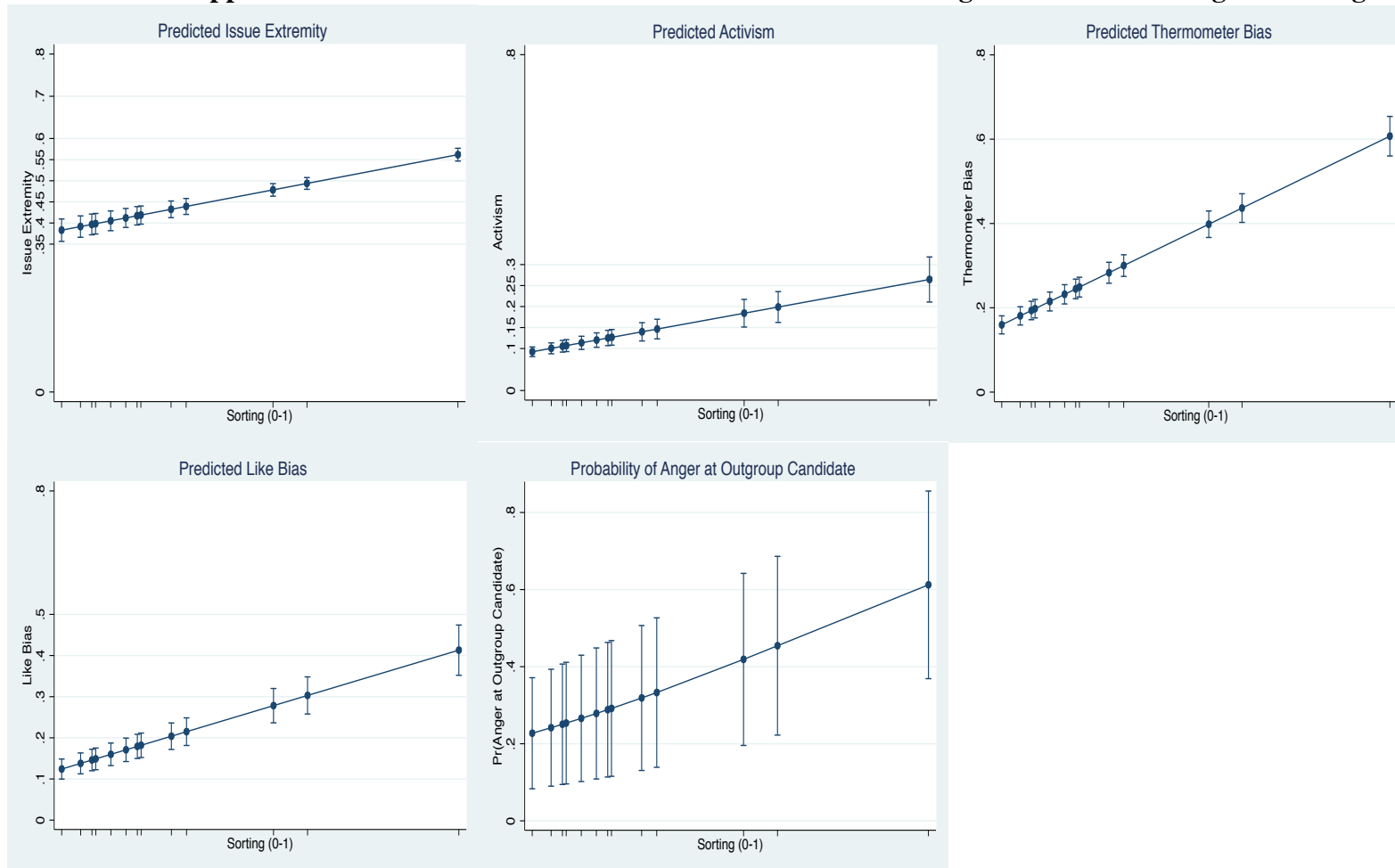
Note: Data from ANES cumulative file. Note that these models do not control for the other measures of polarization. In particular, the behavioral polarization models do not control for issue extremity, as they did in Chapters 6 and 7. This was done in order to give a comparable assessment of each type of polarization, without controlling for the other types.

Table A8.2. Originating regressions for Chapter 8 Figure 3

	Issue polarization	Thermometer Bias	Social Distance Bias	Activism	Anger
Sorting	0.40 (.05)	0.63 (.08)	0.66 (.07)	0.56 (.10)	-0.60 (.11)
Threat					0.01 (.10)
SortingXThreat					0.82 (.16)
Sophistication	-0.01 (.03)	0.09 (.05)	-0.04 (.04)	0.27 (.06)	0.14 (.05)
White	-0.04 (.02)	0.00 (.04)	0.03 (.04)	-0.05 (.05)	0.03 (.05)
Hispanic	-0.07 (.02)	0.04 (.04)	0.08 (.04)	0.06 (.05)	0.03 (.05)
Black	-0.08 (.03)	0.00 (.05)	0.11 (.05)	0.11 (.06)	-0.16 (.06)
Male	0.01 (.01)	-0.04 (.02)	-0.01 (.02)	0.08 (.03)	-0.01 (.02)
Income	0.00 (.00)	0.00 (.00)	-0.01 (.00)	0.01 (.00)	0.00 (.00)
Age	0.01 (.00)	0.03 (.01)	0.01 (.01)	0.02 (.01)	0.02 (.01)
Church Attendance	0.00 (.02)	0.03 (.03)	0.05 (.03)	0.00 (.04)	-0.02 (.03)
Constant	0.42 (.04)	-0.03 (.07)	-0.17 (.07)	-0.47 (.10)	0.37 (.10)
N	723	723	723	723	723

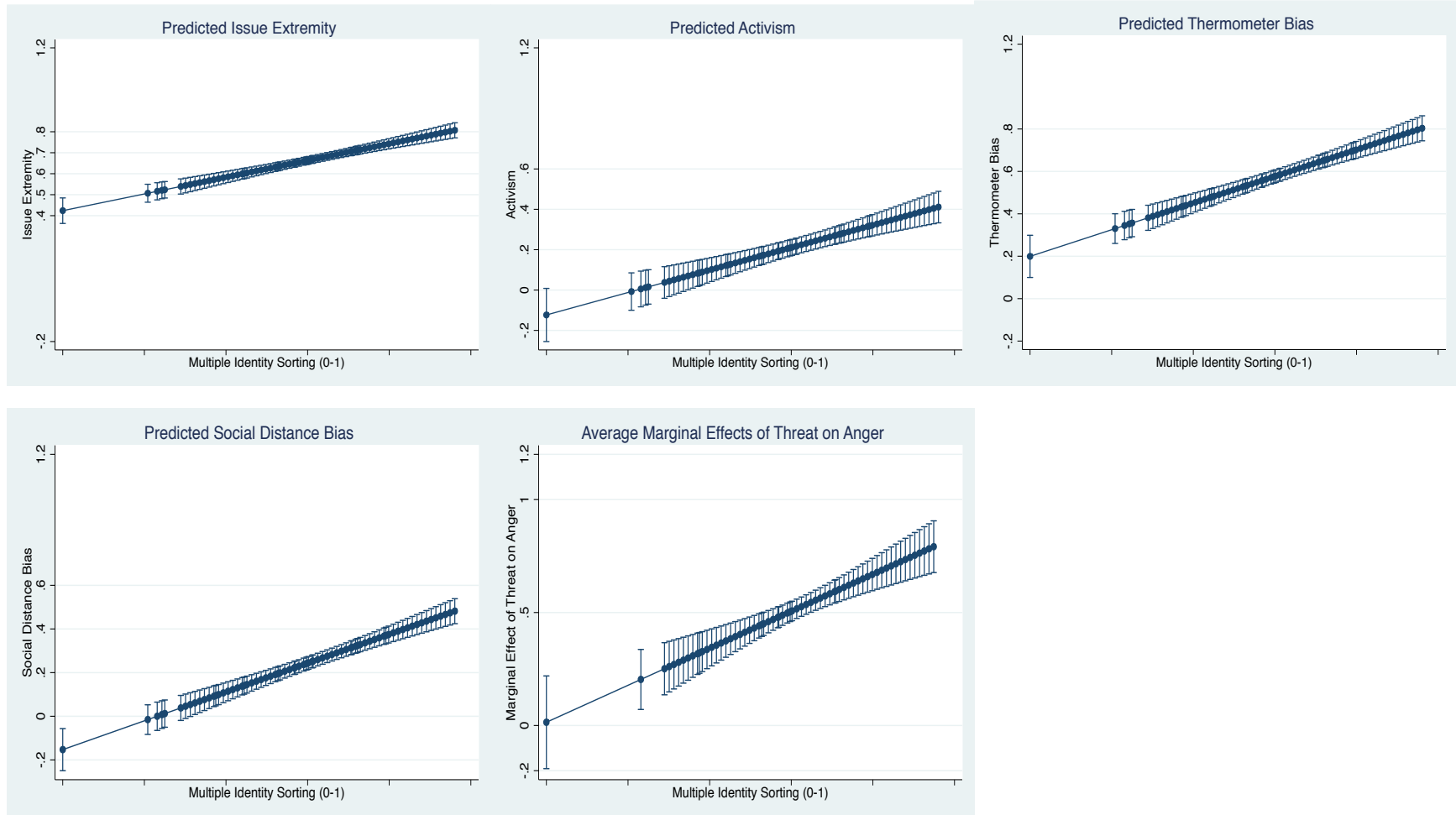
Note: Data from Polimetrix 2011 survey. Note that these models do not control for the other measures of polarization. In particular, the behavioral polarization models do not control for issue extremity, as they did in Chapters 6 and 7. This was done in order to give a comparable assessment of each type of polarization, without controlling for the other types.

Appendix 8.2 Predicted Values and Probabilities across the range of Partisan-Ideological Sorting



Note: Data drawn from ANES cumulative file. Sorting shown at each category listed in Appendix 4.1. All variables except sorting are held at their means or modes. 95 percent confidence intervals shown. Sorting ranges from 0 to 1, values aren't shown due to a recoding required by the "margins" function in STATA that requires all values to be integers. Sorting was thus recoded for the purposes of this figure and values do not match those in the text. Their relative effects are identical to the original codings, however. All scales of predicted values are manually constricted to the same range, in order to be visually comparable.

Appendix 8.3 Predicted Values and Marginal Effects across the range of Multiple Identity Sorting.



Note: Data drawn from the Polimetrix 2011 survey. All variables except sorting are held at their means or modes. The Anger model represents the marginal effect of threat on anger at varying levels of sorting. 95 percent confidence intervals shown. Sorting ranges from 0 to 1, values aren't shown due to a recoding required by the "margins" function in STATA that requires all values to be integers. Sorting was thus recoded for the purposes of this figure and values do not match those in the text. Their relative effects are identical to the original codings, however. All scales of predicted values are manually constricted to the same range, in order to be visually comparable.