

Voting in Groups, Thinking Like Ideologues: A Context-Dependent Theory of Mass Partisanship

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Abstract

Americans have rarely been better-informed about the policies that divide Republicans and Democrats, but voting behavior remains tethered to prejudice and sectarianism. To address this disconnect, I suggest that the meaning of mass partisanship depends on the context in which Americans express their party ID. In particular, partisan voting should covary with the prejudices that campaigns foment, even as non-electoral partisan expression covaries with policy attitudes. To test this premise, I leveraged a question wording experiment on the 2018 Cooperative Congressional Election Study. Respondents indicated either their affect toward groups, or their beliefs about whether these groups' policies should be represented in government. Compared to co-partisans that did not vote in their parties' midterm primaries, partisan voters asserted stronger warmth bias toward co-partisan groups, but favored co-partisan groups' policy preferences at similar rates. However, the reverse held for a non-electoral form of partisan expression: blanket endorsement or opposition to several executive orders endorsed by President Trump. Unlike partisan voting, party-line verdicts on Trump's initiatives were associated with partisan policy alignment, rather than warmth bias toward co-partisan groups. By accounting for the context-dependent properties of partisan behavior, I offer a potential waystation between group and issue-based models of mass partisanship.

Americans have always aligned with the party that represents people like them (Achen & Bartels, 2016; Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954; Converse, 1964; D. Green, Palmquist, & Schickler, 2002). Yet modern parties have strengthened the group basis of mass partisanship. As the New Deal Coalition dissipated and the parties realigned on cultural and racial issues, Americans found themselves with fewer identities that cross-cut the party coalitions (Mason, 2018c). As Mason and colleagues document, “socially sorted” partisans are more committed to their own parties, more hostile toward the opposing party, and more convinced that their opponents represent a threat to democracy (Kalmoe & Mason, n.d.; Mason, 2014, 2016, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c; Mason & Wronski, 2018).

The present analysis does not deny these trends. Group theory has informed how political scientists understand both party ID and long-term partisan change. Yet as the cornerstone account of party ID, group theory faces an important challenge: *Americans possess more policy sophistication than group theory would predict*. Since Converse (1964), group accounts of party ID have maintained that citizens are uninterested in policy and ideology (Kinder & Kalmoe, 2017). But at present, Americans understand that Republicans and Democrats advocate different things; understand many of these differences (Goggin, Henderson, & Theodoridis, 2020; Hetherington, 2001; Sniderman & Stiglitz, 2012); and use policy cues to infer candidates’ partisanship (Goggin et al., 2020) and evaluate both out-partisan civilians (Orr & Huber, 2020) and elected officials (Costa, 2021). This suggests that while modern parties make group conflict more potent, the left-right divide structures how Americans think about partisan choice.

This article proposes one reason for this disconnect: *the meaning of mass partisanship depends on the context in which Americans express their party*

ID. Specifically, I propose that group attachments explain why Americans vote for their parties' candidates, while policy alignment explains other, non-electoral forms of partisan expression. Put differently, Americans are capable of democratic citizenship, because the choices that parties provide help them in these efforts. But when Americans' behavior has the most impact on policy outcomes, these qualities find incomplete expression.

To begin, I describe the evidence for both the group and issue-based models of party *ID* – and explain why both make important contributions to American politics research. However, I also note that Americans' voting behavior offers the strongest evidence for the group-based model, while Americans' survey responses offer the strongest evidence for the issue-based model.

From there, I theorize that when Americans vote, their behavior aligns with the group conflict that campaigns foment. However, because the left-right divide offers the clearest difference between Republicans and Democrats (Abramowitz, 2010; Sniderman & Stiglitz, 2012), issue positions should determine how Americans act on their party *ID* outside the context of modern campaigns. In other words, the question is not *which* model of mass partisanship is correct – but *when* each model best explains Americans' behavior.

To test this theory, I examined two ways that Americans might express their party *ID*: first, voting in their parties' 2018 midterm primaries; and second, supporting (Republicans) or opposing (Democrats) four executive orders endorsed by then-President Trump. Then, using a question wording experiment on the 2018 Cooperative Congressional Election Study, I assessed either respondents' feelings toward groups (*per se*) or their support for policies associated with these groups. To preview results, voting and cue-following indeed

correlated with different attitudes. Compared to partisan abstainers, partisan voters expressed more positive affect toward co-partisan groups – but showed similar support for the policies these groups represent. But unlike partisan voters, partisan cue-followers showed the reverse pattern. Compared to partisan identifiers with ambivalent responses to Trump’s executive orders, cue-followers showed similar affect toward groups – but were better-aligned with co-partisan groups’ preferred policies. These results held for Republican and Democratic identifiers.

Different kinds of partisan behavior, then, correlated with different kinds of partisan attitudes. As I explain, this offers a way station between group and issue-based models of party ID. At present, Republicans and Democrats indeed dislike their political opponents, for reasons based in affect rather than policy (Iyengar, Lelkes, Levendusky, Malhotra, & Westwood, 2019; Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes, 2012; Mason, 2018c). They also understand that the parties advocate different things and perceive these differences to be important (Costa, 2021; Goggin et al., 2020; Hetherington, 2001; Orr & Huber, 2020; Sniderman & Stiglitz, 2012). Yet if the meaning of mass partisanship depends on context, these patterns are not mutually exclusive. When Republican and Democratic identifiers vote, they are motivated by group conflict. But when they express their party ID outside the ballot box, they are motivated by policy attitudes.

Group-Centric Ideologues?

According to the group-based model of mass partisanship, Republicans and Democrats are mobilized by group attachments and identities. Partisanship is a psychological or social identity (A.P. Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; D. Green et al., 2002), minimally tethered to ideology or policy attitudes. When citizens think about partisan conflict, they imagine the groups that

parties represent, rather than the ideologies or policies they advocate (Converse, 1964; Kalmoe, 2019; Kinder & Kalmoe, 2017; Mason, 2018c). Should the parties realign, citizens gravitate toward the party that represents people like them, even if this means deserting the party whose policies they support (Achen & Bartels, 2016).

In contrast, the issue-based model of mass partisanship argues that Republican and Democratic identifiers have distinct, programmatic positions – and that they understand their party ID as an expression of these positions. Numerous studies indicate that citizens support candidates that reflect their policy attitudes (Ansolabehere, Rodden, & Snyder, 2008; Carmines, Ensley, & Wagner, 2012a; Claggett & Shafer, 2010; Shafer & Claggett, 1995). To be sure, cross-sectional correlations sometimes mean that voters have updated their views to align with parties and candidates they prefer for non-ideological reasons (Layman & Carsey, 2002; Lenz, 2012). Yet as Sniderman (2018) suggests, the overlap between citizens' and parties' attitudes is conspicuously high.

These models offer starkly different narratives about mass partisanship in the United States. Yet in the analysis below, I argue that both models make important contributions to American politics research. Far from a measurement issue, the tension between group and issue-based accounts of party ID is an important feature of American politics in its own right. It reflects an electorate that votes on the basis of group attachments and prejudices – but understands their party ID as an expression of policy attitudes. To make that argument, however, we must first isolate the strongest evidence for both models.

Evidence for the Group-Based Model

The strongest evidence for the group-based model is simple: Americans' partisan attachments are intense, and their intensity has amplified with the realignment of party coalitions (Mason, 2018c). A burgeoning literature on "affective polarization" suggests that Americans harbor increased dislike for their political opponents (Iyengar et al., 2019, 2012; Mason, 2014). According to Mason (2018c), this reflects the heightened degree to which parties reinforce Americans' group attachments (see also Mason & Wronski, 2018). For example, where evangelical Christians might once have been uncertain which party represented them, today's evangelicals have no trouble sorting into the "correct" party (Claassen, Djupe, Lewis, & Neiheisel, 2021). Most importantly, having *multiple* meaningful identities – whether racial, cultural, or economic – poses fewer complications for party ID. Americans are unlikely to be torn between the Republican and Democratic parties, because one party tends to represent all their salient identities (Mason, 2018c).

At present, the intergroup conflict that partisanship engenders is hardly benign. According to an alarming number of analyses, White racism fueled President Trump's successes in the 2016 Republican primaries and general election (DeSante & Smith, 2020; Jardina, 2019; Mutz, 2018; Schaffner, MacWilliams, & Nteta, 2018). Going even further, Westwood and Peterson (2020) suggest that negative racial attitudes are "inseparable" from Republican partisanship. To wit, Tesler (2016) finds that non-Hispanic whites interpret even non-racial issues through the lens of racial resentment, and Kalmoe (2020) suggests parallels between contemporary politics and the immediate, pre-Civil War United States. Needless to say, these parallels are more ominous in the aftermath of an attempted insurrection (on January 6) during

Congress’s certification of President Biden’s Electoral College victory – incited by then-President Trump at his “Save America” rally earlier that morning.

Scholars sometimes suggest that when citizens express group-centric (or racially resentful) attitudes, these are verdicts on the policies and values associated with particular groups (Carmines, Sniderman, & Easter, 2013; Sniderman & Carmines, 1997) rather than groups themselves (see also Huddy, 2018). Of course, some policy reasoning likely causes Republicans to feel colder than Democrats toward LGBT persons; and Democrats to feel warmer than Republicans toward racial and ethnic minorities. Yet this logic only extends so far. For example, non-Hispanic whites were more likely to support Donald Trump in 2016 if they reported “often [feeling] fearful of other races” (DeSante & Smith, 2020; J. Green & McElwee, 2019; Schaffner et al., 2018). It makes little sense to search such attitudes for issue content. It makes even less sense to impose this framework on right-wing extremists that stormed Capitol Hill on January 6, 2021. Republican activists *have* embraced racism and nativism (Parker & Barreto, 2013; Skocpol & Williamson, 2012) – celebrating racist appeals (Valentino, Neuner, & Vandenbroek, 2018) rather than masking these appeals in policy jargon (cf. Mendelberg, 2001). We need to be honest about the sectarianism that partisanship engenders.

Evidence for the Issue-Based Model

Nevertheless, the issue-based model finds support too – and not merely from studies showing cross-sectional correlation between voting and issue positions (cf. Ansolabehere et al., 2008). Rather, the strongest evidence for the issue-based model is that most Americans understand the programmatic substance of partisan conflict. As Sniderman and Stiglitz (2012) note, roughly 75 percent of citizens can correctly locate the Republican and Democratic parties on the

liberal-conservative spectrum; Americans are similarly aware of the parties' positions on specific issues (Hetherington, 2001).

Scholars sometimes undercut this evidence by suggesting that citizens understand the terms “liberal” and “conservative” as social identities in their own right (Conover & Feldman, 1981; Ellis & Stimson, 2012; Mason, 2018c; Mason & Wronski, 2018). To be sure, committed partisans might feel social pressure to know that Democrats are “liberals” and Republicans are “conservatives.” But as Sniderman (2018) notes, this does not explain why citizens take consistent positions on so many different issues. Indeed, even if citizens have simply learned “what goes with what” (Freeder, Lenz, & Turney, 2018), they have still concluded that the parties' positions are *worth* learning. Group theory would not necessarily predict that Americans would care what parties advocate.

Moreover, when Americans are asked to render partisan judgments, they find policy cues more compelling than group cues. Across several survey experiments, Orr and Huber (2020) asked respondents to evaluate the subjects of short vignettes – randomizing the partisanship, policy preferences, or social characteristics of the characters. Their results indicated that whenever respondents expressed bias toward members of their own parties, policy attitudes (rather than group or social indicators) accounted for most of these effects. Elsewhere, Goggin et al. (2020) asked respondents to infer whether candidates were Democrats or Republicans, manipulating the candidates' issue priorities and demographic information. Even when respondents had low levels of political information, their guesses drew primarily on information about the policies that candidates prioritized. Finally, Costa (2021) finds that when Americans use legislators' social media statements to evaluate their job performance, they prefer legislators whose statements align with policies they support – rather

than legislators that use social media for “partisan cheerleading” alone. In other words, Costa’s (2021) respondents rejected legislators that behaved as if the group-based model of party ID were sufficient to account for Americans’ political preferences.

Together, these studies indicate that policy offers citizens uniquely high-quality information about parties. Even if these associations do not always explain voting behavior, Americans make powerful associations between parties and specific policies. Nevertheless, this tension offers important insight on the debate between group and issue-based models of party ID.

A Thought Experiment – and Equation

For our purposes, the question is simple: why are Republicans and Democrats so *group*-centric on Election Day, but so *issue*-centric on sample surveys? Americans understand what parties advocate and use this information in a variety of contexts – but vote, it seems, for altogether different reasons. Group conflict appears to explain why Americans vote for their parties’ candidates, even though the left-right divide structures how Americans think about partisan conflict.

In the analysis that follows, I propose that this disconnect is not a paradox. To be sure, voting is the most consequential expression of party ID. But in different contexts, the same individuals might well express their party ID for different reasons. Indeed, *how Americans think about political parties* need not reflect *why Americans vote for their parties’ candidates*. As I explain below, several features of contemporary American politics promote this disconnect. Consider that when Americans express their party ID, they may sometimes draw on their *own* interpretations of partisan conflict – and sometimes on the way that campaigns *want* them to understand this conflict. In the equation

below, R represents identification with the Republican Party, and A represents membership in any politically salient group. The equation, then, expresses the probability that a self-identified Republican belongs to group A .

$$P(A | R) = \frac{P(R | A) \times P(A)}{P(R)} \quad (1)$$

Of course, this equation is simply Bayes' rule – re-purposed to explain the disconnect outlined above. According to basic laws of probability, group A 's share of the Republican coalition will be a function of the proportion of group A that identifies with the Republican Party. Note that if party competition is high, we can safely assume that the proportions of Democrats and Republicans in the electorate are roughly equal.

Party Organizations Care about $P(A | R)$

In their efforts to mobilize voters, the Republican National Committee would likely care about all the component parts of this equation. Just as party organizations always have, the RNC should care about the centrality of particular groups to their winning coalitions – represented by $P(A | R)$. As they develop their campaign outreach, the RNC is likely to weigh this information against both the objective size of group A and group A 's loyalty to the Republican Party – represented, respectively, by $P(A)$ and $P(R | A)$. In short, rational campaigns should take stock of how prominent groups are to their winning coalitions, how loyal groups are to the party, and whether groups are large enough to bother targeting in campaign appeals.

To be clear, campaigns have always cared about these things. Yet compared to earlier decades, party organizations are arguably more inclined to understand their coalitions in terms of constituent groups. The clearest reason

for this is that interest groups and activists currently dominate party organizations (Layman, Carsey, Green, Herrera, & Cooperman, 2010), influencing the content of party platforms and the nomination of candidates (Bawn et al., 2012; Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2009; Hassell, 2018; Noel, 2013). By definition, activists should care about the lifestyles and values of coalition groups – and know how to effectively communicate with group members. Returning to our equation, this suggests that parties have an expanded view of their winning coalitions and (perhaps) more sensible strategies to mobilize coalition groups. For any group A , activist-centered parties might be more informed about $P(A | R)$ and more sophisticated in their outreach efforts.

Even before the advent of modern campaigns, parties realized that mobilizing their own voters was more efficient than persuading opposing-party members (Leege, Wald, Krueger, & Mueller, 2002; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993). But at present, both the Republican and Democratic National Committees use state voter files to conduct “microtargeted” outreach (Hersh, 2015; Nickerson & Rogers, 2014). This does not mean that parties have unlimited data about citizens’ attitudes, nor that their perceptions of voters are accurate (Endres, 2016). Nevertheless, it means that the inferences campaigns draw about voters depend on non-ideological indicators: voter registration, past voting behavior, and demographic information. This means that on a district-by-district level, campaigns can at least *attempt* to infer groups’ relevance to their winning coalitions.

Indirectly, microtargeting might make voting behavior more sectarian. While microtargeting involves outreach to individuals, voter files do not delineate the policies that citizens favor (Hersh, 2015). Thus, Hersh (2015) suggests that microtargeting prioritizes information about citizens’ party registration

and demographics. Indeed, [Endres \(2016\)](#) shows that depending on state, inferences about individuals' *issue* positions are among the least reliable that Big Data facilitates. Returning to our equation, this means that campaigns' ability to infer $P(A | R)$ will often be highest when A represents a demographic category such as gender, age cohort, or (depending on state) race and ethnicity. The lowest-hanging fruit, from the perspective of microtargeting, are potential voters from groups for whom $P(A | R)$ can best be inferred on the basis of state voter files.

Citizens Care about $P(R | A)$

Thus, party organizations have distinct motivations to know the composition of party coalitions – and they have distinct (albeit limited) tools to ascertain this information. Yet despite concerns about Orwellian overreach, campaigns are not privy to endless information about citizens' values, preferences, and daily lives ([Hersh, 2015](#)). Outside the context of modern campaigns, what might motivate Americans to express (or not express) their party ID?

To answer this question, we must consider what information is easiest for citizens to ascertain. To think and reason about parties, Americans might simply note the factors that (seem to) differentiate Republicans and Democrats. Returning to our equation, this implies that citizens would care primarily about $P(R | A)$ or $P(D | A)$: the probability that individuals from group A identify with the Republican or Democratic parties.

Of course, citizens should not know $P(R | A)$ for sure. Instead, their beliefs should reflect the way that humans draw associations. Americans lack the data available to modern campaigns, and they lack campaigns' incentive to mobilize coalition groups. As such, Americans' should prioritize distinctions between

Republican and Democratic *identifiers*, rather than differences between the Republican and Democratic *coalitions*.

Different Priorities Mean Different Perceptions

As Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate, the differences between party coalitions need not reflect the differences between partisan identifiers. Using data from the 2018 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (Schaffner, Ansolabehere, & Luks, 2019), I examined potential differences between the parties. To proxy for programmatic differences, I used ideological self-identification – that is, whether individuals identified as liberal or conservative on the traditional seven-point scale.¹ To capture group differences, I examined racial and ethnic background; educational attainment; union membership (current or former); and religious affiliation. Just as importantly, because the parties’ regional strongholds realigned in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement (Achen & Bartels, 2016; Carmines & Stimson, 1989), I looked specifically at white, non-Hispanic Southerners.

For each potential difference *A*, Figure 1 shows information that party organizations should care about: *A*’s respective shares of the Democratic and Republican parties-in-the-electorate. Of course, rational campaigns should prioritize groups that compose disproportionately larger shares of their *own* coalitions. For example, it should matter to the Democratic National Committee that African Americans compose 21 percent of Democratic identifiers – but only 2.5 percent of Republican identifiers. Likewise, one would expect

¹If we examined issue positions rather than self-reported ideology, we would still find similarly lopsided, symmetrical differences between Republican and Democratic identifiers.

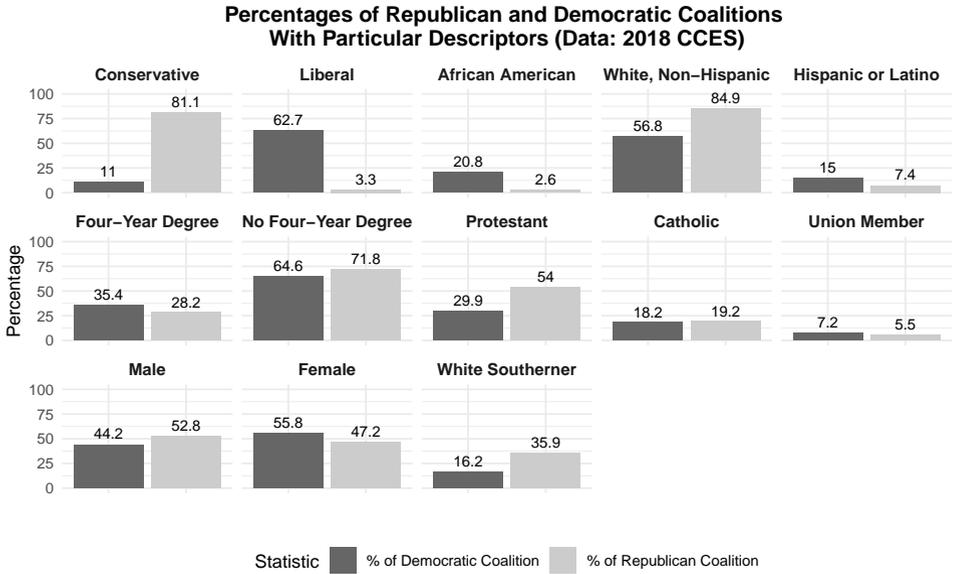


Fig. 1 Percentages of Republican and Democratic Coalitions with Particular Descriptors. **Data:** 2018 Cooperative Congressional Election Study ($n = 60,000$)

the Republican National Committee to care that non-Hispanic whites compose 85 percent of Republican identifiers – but only 57 percent of Democratic identifiers.

Yet when citizens conceptualize the parties, they should not draw upon the information in Figure 1. Indeed, it would be strange if they did. Thus, Figure 2 plots information that citizens are more likely to draw upon: the percentages of *A* that identify (respectively) as Democrats or Republicans.

Taken together, these figures suggest an impressive regularity: clear differences between Republican and Democratic *identifiers* need not represent equally clear differences between the Republican and Democratic *coalitions*. This means that differences obvious to party organizations need not be obvious to citizens. Depending on the breakdown of partisan identifiers, *coalition* differences might be significant enough for parties to leverage – but too subtle for Americans to internalize.

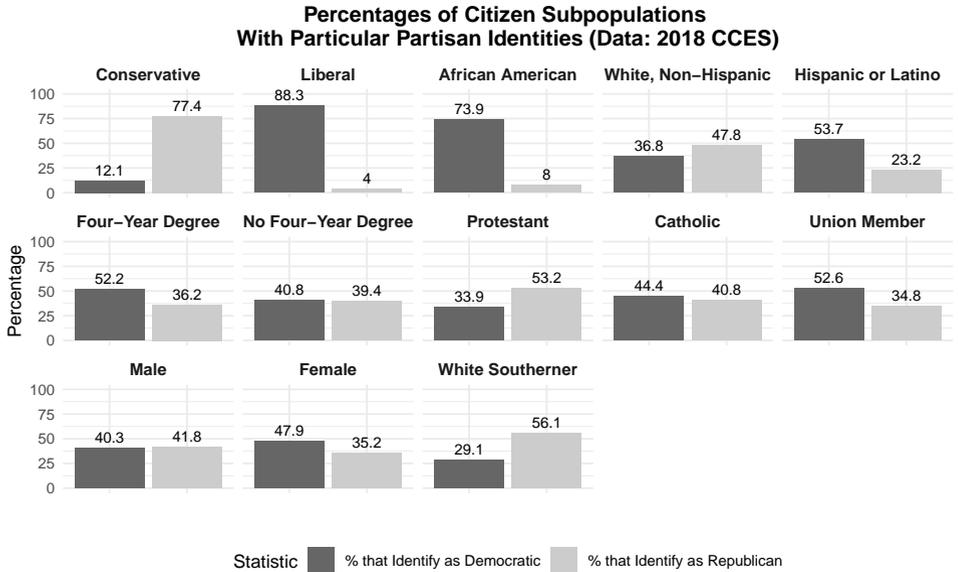


Fig. 2 Percentages of Groups that Identify as Democratic or Republican. **Data:** 2018 Cooperative Congressional Election Study ($n = 60,000$)

For our purposes, Figures 1 and 2 shed light on the disconnect described above: recent elections have turned on successful appeals to group identities and intergroup conflict – even though Americans’ *perceptions* of the parties are much less identitarian. Seeking to mobilize citizens, parties should leverage all the significant differences in Figure 1. While ideology clearly breaks along partisan lines, demographic differences offer additional opportunities. Because group-based appeals speak to powerful human experiences (Achen & Bartels, 2016; Kinder & Kam, 2009; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), parties would leave votes on the table if they ignored this information.

This logic implies that on Election Day, the group-based model of mass partisanship will explain why partisan identifiers turn out for their parties’ candidates. Those that participate will have responded (whether consciously or not) to mobilization efforts informed by the information in Figure 1. Compared to those that stay home on Election Day, partisan identifiers that *vote*

for their parties' candidates should express more positive feelings toward co-partisan groups and more negative feelings toward out-partisan groups. Just as importantly, these emotions – rather than any policy content they might otherwise connote – should distinguish partisan voters from partisan abstainers. These expectations are formalized in H_1 .

H_1 : **Partisan voting behavior** is more strongly associated with *positive feelings toward co-partisan groups and negative feelings toward out-partisan groups* – rather than with *whether partisan identifiers share their parties' policy attitudes*.

Yet even if H_1 is correct, Figure 2 indicates that intergroup conflict – however potent – need not structure how Americans think about parties. Without party organizations demanding Americans' attention, group conflict might have less influence on partisan behavior. In non-electoral settings, citizens' strategies for understanding parties should shift – reflecting not differences between party *coalitions* (Figure 1), but differences between partisan *identifiers* (Figure 2) that can be easily inferred.

Of the potential differences in Figure 2, only self-identified conservatives showed consolidated Republican loyalties. Only self-identified liberals and African Americans showed consolidated Democratic loyalties. Thus, for citizens forming “mental models” of the parties, African Americans' Democratic loyalties represent the only sufficiently stark group difference. Since other groups' loyalties are nowhere near as obvious, group differences may not offer Americans a comprehensive roadmap for partisan choice. On this count, the left-right divide – not the parties' differences in group composition – offers the easiest framework.

Consequently, the issue-based model of mass partisanship should explain how Americans express their party ID *in non-electoral contexts*. In these settings, there is no analogous “get-out-the-vote” effort determining whether

Americans express their party ID. As a result, partisan behavior should depend primarily on whether Americans share their parties' policy attitudes – rather than policy-neutral feelings toward the parties' constituent groups. H_2 formalizes this logic.

H_2 : Non-electoral forms of partisan expression are more strongly associated with *whether partisan identifiers share their parties' policy attitudes* – rather than whether they have *positive feelings toward co-partisan groups and negative feelings toward out-partisan groups*.

That is, when the choice to express one's party ID depends on how Americans think about political parties – rather than how campaigns *want* them to think about political parties – partisan identifiers should draw upon the left-right divide. Parties care about manufacturing winning coalitions; citizens care about navigating partisan choice. At present, this means that voting might indeed correlate with prejudice and sectarianism – even if the left-right divide explains why citizens express their party ID outside the voting booth.

Methodological Approach

H_1 posited that partisan voting depends on warmth bias toward co-partisan groups *rather* than partisan policy alignment. H_2 predicted that when Americans express their party ID in non-electoral contexts, the reverse pattern should hold. Yet to test these hypotheses, I faced two obstacles. First, Americans might hold positive feelings toward co-partisan groups because they favor these groups' preferred policies – and vice versa. Second, social desirability bias might cause respondents to under-report negative feelings toward particular groups.

These challenges required trade-offs. To reduce social desirability effects, respondents were not asked about racial or ethnic groups (*per se*). However, to capture the racial and ethnic dimensions of group affect, one item asked about

“illegal immigrants.” This seemed a reasonable compromise. By using anti-immigrant language himself, President Trump had effectively condoned such attitudes. Thus, compared to items about “Blacks” or “Hispanics,” respondents might have been more truthful about their attitudes toward “illegal immigrants.” Yet even if some social desirability effects crept in, respondents were asked about other groups as well.

The problem of observational equivalence was more difficult to address. Policies are often about groups. Thus, the research design needed to simultaneously *overcome* this overlap, and *respect* it as an important feature of American politics. It was necessary to disentangle group affect from policy attitudes, to be sure. But at the same time, the comparison needed to be meaningful. For example, if we discovered that feelings toward evangelical Christians were associated with partisan voting, but attitudes on financial deregulation were not, that would hardly be evidence for H_1 .

To address this challenge, I assessed group affect and policy attitudes with *items that referenced the same party-stereotypical groups*. However, to avoid spillover effects between items, I leveraged a split-sample design on the 2018 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (module sponsored by my home institution, $n = 1000$). Half the sample were asked their feelings toward three Republican and three Democrat-stereotypical groups. The other half indicated whether each group *should have their policy preferences represented in government*. Because respondents were primed to think about the same groups, the design promised to capture the distinction between issue-based and group-based partisanship.

In the *Feelings* condition ($n = 503$), respondents provided “thermometer” evaluations of six groups: big business, rich people, and evangelical Christians (Republican-stereotypical groups); and labor unions, illegal immigrants, and

gays and lesbians (Democrat-stereotypical groups). Respondents indicated (on a 0-to-100 scale) whether they felt warm, cold, or neutral toward each group. In this manner, the *Feelings* condition assessed *warmth bias toward co-partisan groups*. For Republican identifiers, warmth bias meant positive feelings toward big business, rich people, and evangelical Christians – and negative feelings toward gays and lesbians, illegal immigrants, and labor unions. For Democratic identifiers, warmth bias implied the reverse.²

In contrast, the *Policies* condition ($n = 497$) asked respondents to consider the groups in programmatic terms. Instead of thermometer ratings, respondents indicated whether they agreed or disagreed that each group’s policy preferences “should be represented in government.” Responses were on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Thus, the *Policies* condition primed respondents to see groups as policy actors – but without requiring precise inference about the policies that groups champion.

Nevertheless, by priming respondents to think about issue conflict, the *Policies* condition implicitly directed respondents to indicate which groups’ priorities were most worthy of representation. Republican and Democratic identifiers in the *Policies* condition, then, signaled whether they preferred that co-partisan groups – rather than out-partisan groups – see their policy visions realized. For Republican identifiers, *partisan policy alignment* implied stronger agreement that Republican-stereotypical groups – rather than Democrat-stereotypical groups – have their preferences represented. For Democratic identifiers, partisan policy alignment implied the reverse.

Since the *Feelings* and *Policies* conditions offered different response options, they were not directly comparable. However, respondents in both conditions had implicitly *compared* groups associated with both parties. Looking

²Appendix 1 provides more information about question wording, instructions, and response options for both the *Feelings* and *Policies* conditions.

just at partisan identifiers, I created a count variable (*Favoritism*) indicating how often respondents signaled preference for a co-partisan rather than out-partisan group. This variable ranged from 0 to 9; scores of 9 signaled either that respondents felt warmer toward all three co-partisan groups than they did toward all three out-partisan groups (*Feelings* condition); or that they expressed stronger support for the policies favored by all three co-partisan groups (*Policies* condition). Broken down by respondent partisanship and condition, Figure 3 shows the distribution of this variable. To clarify how the *Favoritism* variable was constructed, Tables 1 and 2 show how this score would have been computed for a (hypothetical) Republican respondent in each of the two conditions.³

Finally, testing H_1 and H_2 required face-valid measures of partisan voting and non-electoral partisan expression. To assess partisan voting, I determined whether respondents voted in their parties' 2018 midterm primaries. While respondents' voting behavior was based on self-report, they were only coded as voters if YouGov matched them to their states' voter file for the appropriate election. *Partisan Voting* was coded 1 if Republican and Democratic identifiers voted in their own party's primary elections; and 0 if they either abstained from voting or (much less frequently) voted in an opposing-party primary election. For respondents in states with non-partisan primaries (Washington

³Indeed, by using respondents' answers to make *qualitative* conclusions about their preferences, I implicitly controlled for differential scale usage. Respondents in the *Feelings* condition might have been predisposed to offer positive or negative evaluations. Asked whether groups' policy preferences "should be represented in government," respondents in the *Policies* condition might have tolerated representation for out-partisan groups – but lacked enthusiasm for these groups' goals. Alternatively, some respondents might have felt uncomfortable (as a matter of principle) endorsing representation on the basis of group membership. By measuring warmth bias and policy alignment using *implicit comparisons* in respondents' answers, I obviated these concerns.

Table 1 Construction of *Favoritism* score for a hypothetical **Republican** respondent in the *Feelings* condition, where respondents indicated thermometer ratings of the party-stereotypical groups. Based on the respondent's answers, the respondent indicates 5 (of 9 possible) Republican-consistent preferences for a *co-partisan* rather than *out-partisan* group.

Group	Stereotypical Party	Therm. Rating	Comparison, Co-Partisan and Out-Partisan Group	Prefers Co-Partisan Group?
<i>Evangelical Christians</i>	Republican	80	Evangelicals vs. Immigrants	✓
<i>Big Business</i>	Republican	60	Evangelicals vs. Gays	✓
<i>Rich People</i>	Republican	40	Evangelicals vs. Unions	✓
<i>Illegal Immigrants</i>	Democratic	10	Business vs. Immigrants	✓
<i>Gays & Lesbians</i>	Democratic	70	Business vs. Gays	—
<i>Labor Unions</i>	Democratic	60	Business vs. Unions	—
			Rich vs. Immigrants	✓
			Rich vs. Gays	—
			Rich vs. Unions	—
Favoritism Score				5

and California), *Partisan Voting* was coded 1 if the respondent participated in the non-partisan primary, and 0 otherwise.⁴

To assess non-electoral partisan expression, I examined *Cue-Following* behavior. On the 2018 CCES Common Content, respondents were informed that President Trump had issued several executive orders during the first years of his presidency: authorizing the Keystone XL pipeline; recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel; withdrawing from negotiations about the Trans-Pacific

⁴Appendix 1 provides more information about how *Partisan Voting* and *Partisan Cue-Following* were coded.

Table 2 Construction of *Favoritism* score for a hypothetical **Republican** respondent in the *Policies* condition, where respondents indicated whether “the policy preferences of [*GROUP NAME HERE*] should be represented in government.” Based on the respondent’s answers, the respondent indicates 6 (of 9 possible) Republican-consistent preferences for a *co-partisan* rather than *out-partisan* group.

Group	Stereotypical Party	Response	Comparison, Co-Partisan and Out-Partisan Group	Prefers Co-Partisan Group?
<i>Evangelical Christians</i>	Republican	Strongly agree	Evangelicals vs. Immigrants	✓
<i>Big Business</i>	Republican	Neither agree nor disagree	Evangelicals vs. Gays	✓
<i>Rich People</i>	Republican	Agree	Evangelicals vs. Unions	✓
<i>Illegal Immigrants</i>	Democratic	Strongly disagree	Business vs. Immigrants	✓
<i>Gays & Lesbians</i>	Democratic	Agree	Business vs. Gays	–
<i>Labor Unions</i>	Democratic	Neither agree nor disagree	Business vs. Unions	–
			Rich vs. Immigrants	✓
			Rich vs. Gays	–
			Rich vs. Unions	✓
			Favoritism Score	6

Partnership (TPP); and withdrawing from the Paris Climate Accord. Respondents indicated whether they supported or opposed each order, and were not permitted to signal ambivalence. As these are all fairly difficult issues to understand (Carmines & Stimson, 1980), Trump’s endorsement should have signaled to Republicans that they should support them (Barber & Pope, 2019; Lenz,

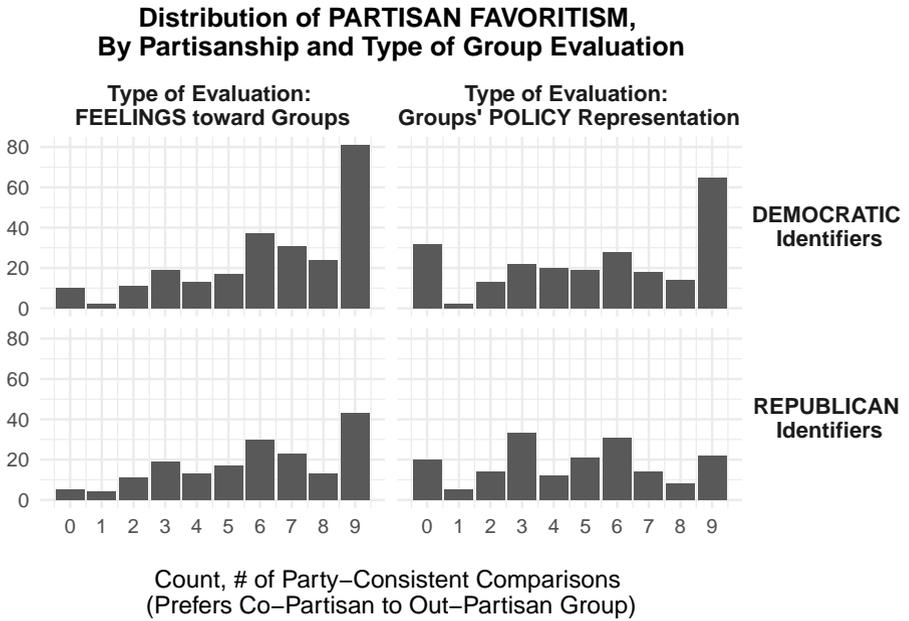


Fig. 3 Distribution of *Partisan Favoritism* by Respondent Partisanship and Condition (*Feelings* or *Policies*). *Partisan Favoritism* is a count variable (ranging from 0 to 9) describing the number of times that respondents’ evaluations of the Republican and Democratic-stereotypical groups indicated that they either felt warmer toward a co-partisan rather than out-partisan group (*Feelings* condition) or were more sympathetic to representing a co-partisan group’s policy preferences in government (*Policies* condition).

2012) or signaled to Democrats that they should oppose them (Nicholson, 2012).⁵

Cue-Following, then, is a binary variable indicating whether Republican identifiers endorsed all four executive orders (1 = yes; 0 = no) or Democratic identifiers opposed all four (1 = yes; 0 = no). Assuming they read the prompt and understood that President Trump endorsed each executive order, Democrats that disagreed (or Republicans that agreed) with all four cues

⁵With one caveat: for Jewish respondents, recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capitol (and relocating the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem) might indeed constitute an “easy” issue (see Carmines & Stimson, 1980). Thus, if Jewish respondents supported Trump’s position on this issue, their behavior would have less significance as *cue-following* or *cue-rejecting* behavior. However, when Jewish respondents are dropped from the analysis, the conclusions are substantively unchanged.

had signaled that they were loyal to their parties' positions. Similarly, where Democrats agreed (or Republicans disagreed) with at least one of Trump's orders, they had refused to defer to their parties' (assumed) positions.

Modeling and Expected Effects

Separate analyses were conducted for Republican and Democratic identifiers. Using negative binomial regression, I modeled *Favoritism* as the triple interaction between *Partisan Voting*, partisan *Cue-Following*, and assignment to the *Policies* (rather than *Feelings*) condition. As a practical matter, it was necessary to interact *Voting* with *Cue-Following*. By accounting for partisan identifiers that engaged in one, both, or neither of these activities, we could assess the underlying theory: while partisan voting turns on sectarianism, non-electoral partisan expression turns on policy attitudes.⁶

H_1 and H_2 implied straightforward expectations. First, compared to partisan identifiers that did not vote in their parties' midterm primaries, partisan voters should have reported stronger favoritism in the *Feelings* condition – indicating more consistent warmth bias toward co-partisan groups. Meanwhile, partisan identifiers in the *Policies* condition – whether they voted or abstained – should have shown comparable favoritism toward co-partisan groups' policy preferences. This would support H_1 , indicating that *warmth bias toward co-partisan groups* – rather than shared policy preferences – differentiates partisan voters from partisan abstainers.

Second, *Cue-Following* should have produced stronger effects in the *Policies* condition. Compared to Republican identifiers that disagreed with Trump

⁶The tetrachoric correlation between *Partisan Voting* and *Cue-Following* was approximately 0.5. This indicated that while partisan voters were more likely to take party-line positions on Trump's executive orders, substantial numbers either (1) voted in their parties' midterm primaries but had mixed feelings about Trump's executive orders or (2) gave party-line verdicts on Trump's executive orders but did not vote in the midterm primaries.

at least once, Republican identifiers that agreed with all four of Trump’s executive orders should have expressed stronger favoritism toward policies associated with Republican-leaning groups. Similarly, Democratic identifiers that disagreed with all four executive orders – compared to Democratic identifiers that agreed with Trump at least once – should have indicated stronger favoritism toward policies associated with Democratic-leaning groups. Yet regardless of cue-following behavior, partisan identifiers in the *Feelings* condition should have expressed similar affect toward co-partisan groups. Consistent with H_2 , this would indicate that *partisan policy alignment* – rather than warmth bias toward co-partisan groups – determines who expresses their partisan commitments in non-electoral contexts.

Results

Table 3 shows coefficients and standard errors from the negative binomial regressions described above.⁷ Figures 4 and 5 show main effects from *Voting* and *Cue-Following*, indicating the predicted number of times that respondents either felt warmer toward a co-partisan rather than out-partisan group (*Feelings* condition) or preferred that a co-partisan rather than out-partisan group have their policy preferences represented (*Policies* condition). Marginal effects are reported using Bonferroni corrections for multiple comparisons.

H_1 posited that partisan voting would be associated with warmth bias toward co-partisan groups – rather than policy alignment with one’s chosen party. Consistent with this hypothesis, Republicans that voted in their states’ Republican primaries – compared to Republicans that did not – offered (on average) 1.35 more party-consistent comparisons ($t = 2.73, p < 0.05$). That

⁷Results were substantively unchanged when *Favoritism* was modeled using ordinary-least-squares rather than negative binomial regression. In addition, introducing right-hand-side controls was unnecessary given that randomization achieved balance across potential confounders. See Appendix 1 for more information.

Table 3 Negative Binomial Regression: Determinants of **Partisan Favoritism** for Co-Partisan Groups

	Republican Identifiers	Democratic Identifiers
Constant	1.60*** (0.06)	1.74*** (0.06)
Partisan Voter (Midterm Primaries)	0.32* (0.14)	0.11 (0.13)
Partisan Cue-Follower	0.21* (0.08)	0.05 (0.08)
<i>Policies</i> Condition	-0.33*** (0.10)	-0.31*** (0.09)
Voter × Cue-Follower	-0.16 (0.16)	0.12 (0.15)
Voter × <i>Policies</i> Condition	-0.34 (0.26)	-0.08 (0.19)
Cue-Follower × <i>Policies</i> Condition	0.19 (0.13)	0.30* (0.12)
Voter × Cue-Follower × <i>Policies</i>	0.18 (0.29)	-0.03 (0.23)
θ	20.10* (8.71)	11.77*** (3.09)
<i>N</i>	346	470
AIC	1726.41	2239.20
BIC	1864.88	2388.70
log <i>L</i>	-827.21	-1083.60

Standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable, *Partisan Favoritism*, indicates the number of times (from 0 to 9) that the respondent’s evaluations indicated that they preferred a co-partisan group to an out-partisan group. Respondents in the *Policies* condition indicated whether groups’ “policy preferences should be represented in government”; respondents in the *Feelings* condition (omitted reference category) indicated thermometer evaluations of the groups. *Partisan Voter* indicates whether the respondent voted in their party’s 2018 midterm primaries (1 = yes; 0 = no). *Partisan Cue-Follower* indicates whether Republican respondents agreed with all four of President Trump’s executive orders (1 = yes; 0 = no) or Democratic respondents disagreed with all four (1 = yes; 0 = no). † significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

is, given nine opportunities to signal that they felt warmer toward a Republican rather than Democratic-leaning group, Republicans that voted in the Republican primaries did so more often than co-partisans that did not. Yet in the *Policies* condition – where *Favoritism* indicated preference for co-partisan

groups' policy preferences – Republican voters were indistinguishable from Republican abstainers ($d = -0.04, t = -0.09, n.s.$).

For their part, Democratic identifiers showed the same pattern. In the *Feelings* condition, Democratic identifiers that voted in their states' Democratic primaries – compared to Democrats that did not – made (on average) 1.15 more party-consistent comparisons ($t = 2.75, p < 0.05$). Much like Republican identifiers, the *Policies* condition did not produce marked differences between Democratic voters and abstainers. Given nine opportunities to indicate that they preferred policy representation for Democratic rather than Republican-leaning groups, Democratic voters and abstainers did so at similar rates ($d = 0.47; t = 0.98, n.s.$).

These patterns were consistent with H_1 . They indicated that voting behavior depends not on *issue* positions – but on affect toward groups associated with the major parties. Consistent with group-based models of mass partisanship (Achen & Bartels, 2016; Converse, 1964; Kinder & Kalmoe, 2017; Mason, 2018c), partisan voters felt warmer than partisan abstainers toward co-partisan groups. But meanwhile, partisan voters and abstainers offered indistinguishable verdicts on policies associated with co-partisan and out-partisan groups.

Indeed, H_1 was supported using an uncommonly conservative test. First, partisan voting was measured as participation in the midterm primaries. Even in 2018, the primaries might have piqued disproportionate interest from citizens invested in their parties' policy goals. Just as importantly, both policy alignment and warmth bias were assessed in terms of respondents' reactions to *the same groups* – biasing the design against significant differences between the *Policies* and *Feelings* conditions. Nevertheless, partisan voters and abstainers

expressed similar favoritism toward co-partisan groups' policy goals (*Policies* condition) – even though partisan voters felt significantly warmer toward co-partisan groups (*Feelings* condition).

Had the analysis stopped there, the evidence for H_1 would have reified conventional wisdom about the centrality of groups for mass partisanship. However, H_2 predicted that non-electoral forms of partisan expression would be more strongly associated with policy alignment – rather than warmth bias toward co-partisan groups. Recall that *Cue-Following* measured whether Republican identifiers expressed blanket support (or Democratic identifiers expressed blanket opposition) to four executive orders associated with President Trump.

As Figure 5 makes clear, H_2 also found support. Compared to Republicans that opposed Trump at least once, Republican identifiers that supported all four of Trump's executive orders expressed marginally higher warmth bias toward Republican-leaning groups; however, this difference was not significant after Bonferroni corrections for multiple comparisons ($d = 0.91, t = 2.07, n.s.$). More conclusively, Democratic identifiers – whether or not they opposed all four executive orders – expressed similar warmth bias toward Democratic-leaning groups ($d = 0.57, t = 1.37, n.s.$). In other words, when we examined partisan behavior unrelated to voter turnout, the warmth bias that differentiated partisan voters from partisan abstainers (H_1) did not translate.

Instead, as H_2 implied, the *Policies* condition produced significant differences between cue-followers and cue-rejecters. Compared to Republicans that broke from Trump at least once, Republicans that agreed with all four cues showed more frequent preference for Republican rather than Democratic-leaning groups' policies ($d = 1.79, t = 3.78, p < 0.01$). Compared to Democrats

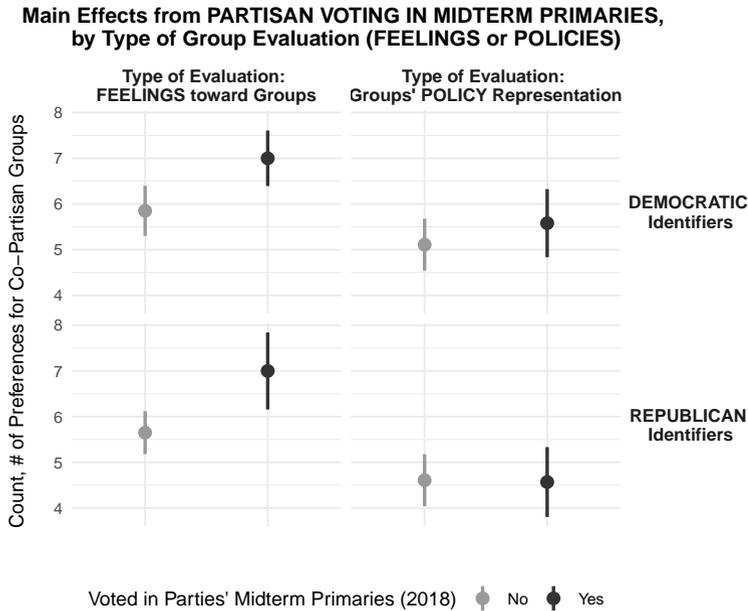


Fig. 4 Main effects from *Partisan Voting* in the 2018 midterm primaries. Marginal effects are based on the negative binomial regressions in Table 3. Models control for the triple interaction between assignment to the *Policies* (rather than *Feelings*) condition, *Partisan Voting* in the midterm primaries, and *Partisan Cue-Following* in response to President Trump’s executive orders. Dependent variable indicates the number of times (from 0 to 9) that respondents preferred a co-partisan-group to an out-partisan group. (Data: 2018 Cooperative Congressional Election Study, team module.)

that agreed with Trump at least once, Democrats that opposed Trump down-the-line preferred Democratic-leaning groups’ policies at higher rates ($d = 1.93, t = 3.96, p < .001$). This supported H_2 – indicating that non-electoral partisan expression correlates more strongly with partisan policy alignment, rather than warmth bias toward co-partisan groups.

In general, but with modest asymmetries between Republican and Democratic identifiers, these patterns held for an alternative measure of *Partisan Voting*: voting for U.S. House in the November 2018 general election.⁸ Compared to Republican identifiers that either abstained or supported an

⁸Table 5 in Appendix 1 provides regression output for this alternative specification.

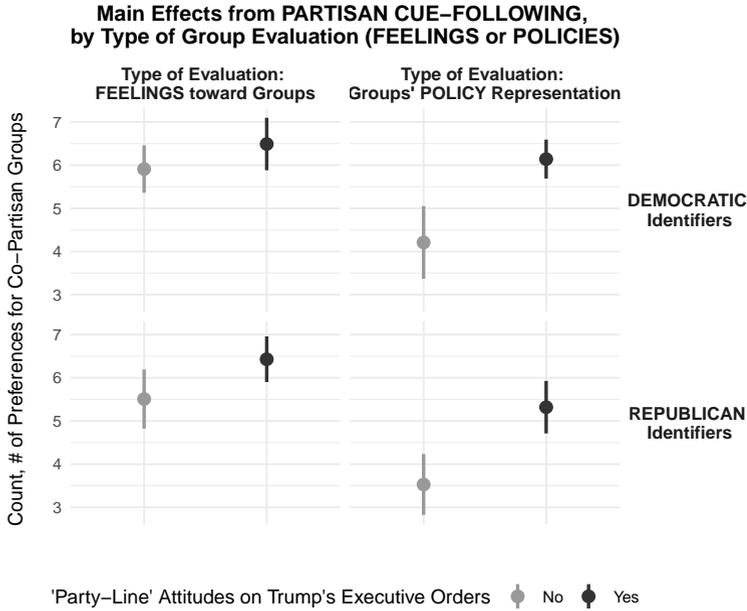


Fig. 5 Main effects from *Partisan Cue-Following* in response to President Trump’s executive orders; *Partisan Cue-Following* indicates whether Republican identifiers endorsed all four positions or Democratic identifiers opposed all four. Marginal effects are based on the negative binomial regressions in Table 3. Models control for the triple interaction between assignment to the *Policies* (rather than *Feelings*) condition, *Partisan Voting* in the 2018 midterm primaries, and *Partisan Cue-Following*. Dependent variable indicates the number of times (from 0 to 9) that respondents preferred a co-partisan group. (Data: 2018 Cooperative Congressional Election Study, team module.)

out-partisan candidate, Republicans that voted for their party’s House candidate showed stronger warmth bias toward co-partisan groups ($d = 1.13, t = 2.45, p < 0.09$). Meanwhile, consistent with H_1 , Republican voters and abstainers expressed similar support for policies associated with co-partisan groups ($d = 0.56, t = 1.07, n.s.$). However, Democratic identifiers that voted for their party’s House candidate did not show *either* stronger warmth bias toward co-partisan groups ($d = 0.88, t = 1.88, n.s.$) or stronger support for these groups’ preferred policies ($d = 0.34, t = 0.67, n.s.$). Thus, at least for Republican identifiers, these results reinforced H_1 . In the November 2018 general election, warmth bias toward co-partisan groups – rather than partisan policy alignment – helped distinguish Republican voters from Republican abstainers.

Using this alternate specification, H_2 still found strong support. *Cue-Following*, our proxy for non-electoral partisan expression, accounted for partisan policy alignment (*Policies*) but not warmth bias toward co-partisan groups (*Feelings*). Republican identifiers preferred Republican groups' policies at higher rates if they agreed with all four of President Trump's executive orders ($d = 1.27, t = 2.64, p < 0.06$). Democratic identifiers preferred Democratic groups' policies at higher rates if they disagreed with Trump down-the-line ($d = 1.77, t = 3.35, p < 0.01$). But warmth bias toward co-partisan groups was unrelated to whether Republican ($d = 0.84, t = 1.83, n.s.$) or Democratic identifiers ($d = 0.40, t = 0.89, n.s.$) took the "party-line" on Trump's executive orders. Consistent with H_2 , this further indicated that issue positions – rather than sectarianism and prejudice – determine who expresses their party ID in non-electoral contexts.

Discussion and Conclusion

To explain mass partisanship in the United States, scholars typically make one of two arguments. First, Republicans and Democrats might see partisan politics as intergroup conflict – identifying with the party that represents people like them, while associating their opponents with disliked social groups (Achen & Bartels, 2016; Claassen et al., 2021; Converse, 1964; D. Green et al., 2002; Kinder & Kalmoe, 2017; Mason, 2018c). Alternatively, they might perceive that the parties have genuine, programmatic differences – aligning with the party closer to their policy attitudes (Claggett & Shafer, 2010; Lupton, Myers, & Thornton, 2015; Sniderman & Stiglitz, 2012).

To reconcile these narratives, I argued, we must determine not *which* model is correct – but *when* each model is correct. Ultimately, the way that party organizations portray partisan conflict need not reflect how citizens understand

this conflict. Reflecting the *non*-ideological strategies that campaigns use to mobilize support (Hersh, 2015; Tomz & Houweling, 2009) and the activist energies of modern parties (Bawn et al., 2012; Cohen et al., 2009), partisan voting should depend on warmth bias toward co-partisan groups (H_1). Yet because the left-right divide offers an especially stark difference between Republican and Democratic identifiers (Abramowitz, 2010; Sniderman & Stiglitz, 2012), policy alignment should determine whether citizens express their partisanship outside the voting booth (H_2).

To test this account on a large- N survey, I randomized whether respondents indicated their feelings toward party-stereotypical groups (*Feelings*) or their beliefs about whether these groups' preferred policies should be represented in government (*Policies*). By tethering responses to the same reference groups, the design distinguished between *warmth bias toward co-partisan groups* and *partisan policy alignment*. According to H_1 and H_2 , the *Feelings* condition should have promoted sharper differences between partisan voters and abstainers, while the *Policies* condition should have promoted sharper differences between partisan identifiers that follow or reject partisan cues.

These expectations were supported. Looking at respondents' attitudes toward Trump's executive orders, I found that partisan policy alignment was more pronounced among Republicans that agreed with Trump down-the-line, and among Democrats that disagreed with him on all counts. However, warmth bias toward co-partisan groups was more pronounced among Republicans and Democrats that voted in their parties' midterm primaries. In other words, warmth bias toward co-partisan groups accounted for whether partisan identifiers voted for their parties' candidates. But policy alignment explained how they adjudicated cues associated with an uncommonly polarizing president.

For scholars of mass partisanship in the United States, these results suggest that the “debate” between group and issue-based accounts is both oversimplified and misleading. It is oversimplified because in an ideologically polarized (Abramowitz, 2010; J.E. Campbell, 2016; McCarty, Poole, & Rosenthal, 2008) and racialized (Kalmoe, 2020; Westwood & Peterson, 2020) party system, scholars will find no shortage of evidence to support both narratives. It is misleading because it neglects that the nature of party ID might depend on context. At present, group conflict appears to be campaigns’ dominant strategy for getting out-the-vote – even though the left-right divide increasingly anchors how Americans think about parties. Thus, it makes sense that voting behavior would turn on sectarian attitudes toward groups associated with the parties – and that these attitudes would represent feelings toward groups (*per se*). Yet, it also makes sense that when people express their party ID in less sectarian contexts, *this* behavior would turn on policy alignment.

Future research must further disentangle these mechanisms. Nevertheless, my evidence addresses the tension between group and issue-based models of party ID. If the meaning of mass partisanship depends on context, American politics research need not argue for a “unified field theory” of party ID. It is unnecessary to argue that partisan identifiers only care about policy because of the strong group ties that party ID promotes. Nor it is necessary to argue that they only express group-centric (or flatly racist) sentiments because their policy attitudes fuel these resentments.

Put differently, neither the group *nor* issue-based models of party ID should be jettisoned. Americans understand the parties’ programmatic differences because the left-right divide is an especially easy way to understand partisan conflict. However, because politics too often appeals to Americans’ worst instincts, their voting behavior reflects prejudice against out-partisan groups.

Motivated to understand parties as group coalitions – and leveraging the parties’ realignment along sociodemographic lines – modern parties have trained their supporters to vote in groups. But citizens, for whom polarization has clarified the ideological differences between the parties, have learned to think like ideologues.

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Format, Question Wording Experiment

- In the *Feelings* condition, respondents were given the following instructions:
 - “We’d like to get your feelings about some people who are in the news these days. We’ll show you the name of a particular group along with something we call the feeling thermometer.

Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the group. Ratings between 0 and 50 degrees mean that you don’t feel favorable toward the group and that you don’t care too much for that group. You would rate the group at the 50-degree mark if you don’t feel particularly warm or cold toward the group. Drag the cursor to indicate how you would rate the group indicated in the question.”

- The six groups (presented in random order) were:
 - * **BIG BUSINESS**
 - * **LABOR UNIONS**
 - * **RICH PEOPLE**
 - * **GAYS AND LESBIANS**
 - * **EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS**
 - * **ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS**

- In the *Policies* condition, respondents were given the following instructions:
 - “Lots of groups have different ideas about what policies government should support. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.”

- The six items (presented in random order) were:
 - * The policy preferences of **big business** should be represented in government.
 - * The policy preferences of **labor unions** should be represented in government.
 - * The policy preferences of **rich people** should be represented in government.
 - * The policy preferences of **gays and lesbians** should be represented in government.
 - * The policy preferences of **evangelical Christians** should be represented in government.
 - * The policy preferences of **illegal immigrants** should be represented in government.

- Response options (with directionality of response-order randomized) read as follows:
 - * Strongly Agree
 - * Agree
 - * Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - * Disagree
 - * Strongly Disagree

Coding Procedures, Explanatory Variables

- *Partisan Primary Voter* is a binary variable indicating whether the respondent voted in their *own* party's 2018 midterm primaries (1 = yes; 0 = abstained from voting or participated in a different primary).

- For respondents outside Washington and California, respondents were coded as having voted in their party’s midterm primaries if they were matched to their state’s voter file **and** indicated on the CCES Common Content that they had participated in their *own* party’s midterm primary.
 - For respondents living in Washington or California, respondents were coded as having voted in their party’s midterm primaries if they were matched to their state’s voter file **and** indicated on the CCES Common Content that they had voted in their state’s non-partisan statewide primary.
 - Respondents from Louisiana were dropped from the analysis, because Louisiana conducted their state primary elections in October 2018 (i.e. while the CCES pre-election module was in-the-field).
 - All other respondents were coded as *not* having participated in their own party’s midterm primaries.
- *Cue-Following* was based on respondents’ attitudes toward four executive orders endorsed by President Trump. On the 2018 CCES Common Content, the prompt read as follows:
 - President Trump has issued many executive orders during the first year of his presidency. Do you support or oppose each of the following decisions?
 - * Recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem
 - * Allow the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline
 - * Withdraw the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement
 - * Withdraw the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a free trade agreement that included the U.S., Japan, Australia, Vietnam, Canada, Chile, etc.

- Response options were “support” or “oppose.” For Republicans, *Cue-Follower* was coded 1 if the respondent *supported all four* of Trump’s executive orders, and 0 otherwise. For Democrats, *Cue-Follower* was coded 1 if the respondent *opposed all four* of Trump’s executive orders, and 0 otherwise.
- *Partisan Voting for U.S. House* (alternate specification) is a binary variable indicating whether the respondent voted for their *own* party’s U.S. House candidate in the 2018 general election (1 = yes; 0 = abstained from voting or supported a different candidate).
 - Respondents were coded as having voted for their party’s U.S. House candidate if they were matched to their state’s voter file **and** indicated that they had voted for their party’s U.S. House candidate in the general election.
 - If respondents were matched to their state’s voter file but did not participate in the post-election module of the CCES, they were coded as having voted for their party’s U.S. House candidate if they indicated on the pre-election module that they planned to do so.
 - Respondents from districts where the U.S. House candidate ran unopposed were dropped from the analysis.
 - All other respondents were coded as having *not* voted for their own party’s U.S. House candidate in the November 2018 general election.

Distribution of Explanatory and Confounding Variables

Table 1 Republican Identifiers, Distribution of Explanatory Variables, *Feelings* and *Policies* Conditions

Variable	<u>Feelings</u> Condition	<u>Policies</u> Condition	Mean or Propor- tion?	 <i>T</i> 	p- value
<i>Primaries:</i> Participated in Republican primaries, 2018	0.28	0.31	Proportion	0.59	<i>n.s.</i>
<i>Partisan House Voting:</i> Voted for Republican U.S. House candidate (general election)	0.52	0.62	Proportion	1.61	<i>n.s.</i>
<i>Cue-Following:</i> Endorsed all four of Trump's executive orders	0.56	0.63	Proportion	1.11	<i>n.s.</i>
Supports relocating U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem (executive order 1)	0.85	0.91	Proportion	1.43	<i>n.s.</i>
Supports authorizing the Keystone XL Pipeline (executive order 2)	0.85	0.82	Proportion	0.64	<i>n.s.</i>
Supports withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (executive order 3)	0.78	0.73	Proportion	0.90	<i>n.s.</i>
Supports withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accords (executive order 4)	0.74	0.76	Proportion	0.34	<i>n.s.</i>
# of executive orders supported	3.21	3.22	Mean	0.08	<i>n.s.</i>

Table 2 Republican Identifiers, Distribution of Confounding Variables, Feelings and Policies Conditions

Variable	Feelings Condition	Policies Condition	Mean or Proportion	T	p-value
Female	0.42	0.48	Proportion	0.83	<i>n.s.</i>
Strong Republican	0.49	0.49	Proportion	0.14	<i>n.s.</i>
Weak Republican	0.28	0.26	Proportion	0.37	<i>n.s.</i>
Four-Year Degree	0.31	0.34	Proportion	0.48	<i>n.s.</i>
Family Income	5.43	5.94	Mean	1.15	<i>n.s.</i>
Income Unreported	0.11	0.13	Proportion	0.55	<i>n.s.</i>
South	0.42	0.29	Proportion	2.36	$p < 0.05$
Non-White	0.17	0.18	Proportion	0.22	<i>n.s.</i>
African American	0.02	0.01	Proportion	0.58	<i>n.s.</i>
Hispanic or Latino	0.10	0.07	Proportion	0.66	<i>n.s.</i>
Born-again Christian	0.38	0.43	Proportion	0.79	<i>n.s.</i>
Interest in Politics	2.28	2.35	Mean	0.64	<i>n.s.</i>
Age (in years)	50.80	51.40	Mean	0.29	<i>n.s.</i>
Ideological self-identification	4.62	4.83	Mean	1.49	<i>n.s.</i>
Trump approval	2.38	2.47	Mean	0.91	<i>n.s.</i>

Notes: Difference-of-proportion tests conducted on binary variables. *Family Income* is a 15-point scale (0 = less than \$10,000, 15 = \$500,000 or higher); *Ideological Self-Identification* is a seven-point scale from “extremely liberal” to “extremely conservative”; *Interest in Politics* is a 0-to-3 scale indicating how often the respondent follows current affairs (0 = hardly at all; 1 = only now and then; 2 = some of the time; 3 = most of the time); and *Trump approval* is a 0-to-3 scale (0 = strongly disapprove; 1 = somewhat disapprove; 2 = somewhat approve; 3 = strongly approve). Because randomization was successful, and significant differences between conditions were modest, control variables were not used in the analysis.

Alternate Measure of Partisan Voting

The text references an alternate specification, where *Partisan Voter* indicated whether the respondent had voted for their own party’s candidate for U.S. House in the November 2018 general election (1 = yes; 0 = abstained from voting or voted for a different candidate). The originating regression for this specification is found below; Appendix 1 describes how the explanatory variables were coded.

Table 3 Democratic Identifiers, Distribution of Explanatory Variables, *Feelings* and *Policies* Conditions

Variable	<u>Feelings</u> <u>Condition</u>	<u>Policies</u> <u>Condition</u>	Mean or Propor- tion?	<i>T</i>	p- value
<i>Primaries:</i> Participated in Democratic primaries, 2018	0.31	0.35	Proportion	0.70	<i>n.s.</i>
<i>Partisan House</i> <i>Voting:</i> Voted for Democratic U.S. House candidate (general election)	0.48	0.52	Proportion	0.54	<i>n.s.</i>
<i>Cue-Following:</i> opposed all four of Trump's executive orders	0.55	0.53	Proportion	0.32	<i>n.s.</i>
Supports relocating U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem (executive order 1)	0.31	0.30	Proportion	0.06	<i>n.s.</i>
Supports authorizing the Keystone XL Pipeline (executive order 2)	0.22	0.23	Proportion	0.25	<i>n.s.</i>
Supports withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (executive order 3)	0.16	0.21	Proportion	1.01	<i>n.s.</i>
Supports withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accords (executive order 4)	0.13	0.12	Proportion	0.05	<i>n.s.</i>
# of executive orders supported	0.81	0.87	Mean	0.39	<i>n.s.</i>

Table 4 Democratic Identifiers, Distribution of Confounding Variables, *Feelings* and *Policies* Conditions

Variable	<u>Feelings</u> Condition	<u>Policies</u> Condition	Mean or Proportion	<i>T</i>	p-value
Female	0.58	0.52	Proportion	1.14	<i>n.s.</i>
Strong Democrat	0.55	0.58	Proportion	0.67	<i>n.s.</i>
Weak Democrat	0.27	0.25	Proportion	0.47	<i>n.s.</i>
Four-Year Degree	0.36	0.31	Proportion	1.07	<i>n.s.</i>
Family Income	4.89	5.13	Mean	0.61	<i>n.s.</i>
Income Unreported	0.09	0.08	Proportion	0.51	<i>n.s.</i>
South	0.41	0.34	Proportion	1.14	<i>n.s.</i>
Non-White	0.40	0.41	Proportion	0.14	<i>n.s.</i>
African American	0.22	0.23	Proportion	0.08	<i>n.s.</i>
Hispanic or Latino	0.09	0.14	Proportion	0.96	<i>n.s.</i>
Born-again Christian	0.22	0.19	Proportion	0.64	<i>n.s.</i>
Interest in Politics	2.34	2.14	Mean	2.00	$p < 0.05$
Age (in years)	46.00	46.10	Mean	0.04	<i>n.s.</i>
Ideological self-identification	1.89	1.79	Mean	0.58	<i>n.s.</i>
Trump approval	0.26	0.28	Mean	0.29	<i>n.s.</i>

Notes: Difference-of-proportion tests conducted on binary variables. *Family Income* is a 15-point scale (0 = less than \$10,000, 15 = \$500,000 or higher); *Ideological Self-Identification* is a seven-point scale from “extremely liberal” to “extremely conservative”; *Interest in Politics* is a 0-to-3 scale indicating how often the respondent follows current affairs (0 = hardly at all; 1 = only now and then; 2 = some of the time; 3 = most of the time); and *Trump approval* is a 0-to-3 scale (0 = strongly disapprove; 1 = somewhat disapprove; 2 = somewhat approve; 3 = strongly approve). Because randomization was successful, and significant differences between conditions were modest, control variables were not used in the analysis.

Table 5 Negative Binomial Regression (**Alternate Specification**), Determinants of Partisan Favoritism for Co-Partisan Groups. *Partisan Voter* reflects partisan voting for U.S. House in the November 2018 general election, rather than participation in the 2018 midterm primaries.

	Democrats	Republicans
Constant	1.74* (0.06)	1.55* (0.07)
Partisan Voter (U.S. House)	0.12 (0.11)	0.29* (0.11)
Partisan Cue-Follower	0.01 (0.10)	0.24* (0.11)
<i>Policies</i> Condition	-0.41* (0.09)	-0.36* (0.12)
Voter × Cue-Follower	0.09 (0.14)	-0.15 (0.15)
Voter × <i>Policies</i> Condition	0.20 (0.16)	0.02 (0.19)
Cue-Follower × <i>Policies</i> Condition	0.44* (0.14)	0.21 (0.18)
Voter × Cue-Follower × <i>Policies</i>	-0.32 (0.21)	-0.12 (0.24)
θ	12.28*	18.08*
	(3.26)	(7.27)
<i>N</i>	476	345
AIC	2271.93	1729.79
BIC	2421.89	1868.16
log <i>L</i>	-1099.97	-828.89

Standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable, *Partisan Favoritism*, indicates the number of times (from 0 to 9) that the respondent's evaluations indicated that they preferred a co-partisan group to an out-partisan group. Respondents in the *Policies* condition indicated whether groups' "policy preferences should be represented in government"; respondents in the *Feelings* condition (omitted reference category) indicated thermometer evaluations of the groups. *Partisan Voter* indicates whether the respondent **voted for their own party's House candidate** in the November 2018 general election (1 = yes; 0 = abstained from voting or supported a different candidate). *Partisan Cue-Follower* indicates whether Republican respondents agreed with all four of President Trump's executive orders (1 = yes; 0 = no) or Democratic respondents disagreed with all four (1 = yes; 0 = no).

* significant at $p < .05$.