

Perceptions of elites and (asymmetric) sorting

Abstract

Conventional wisdom suggests that citizens who recognize party polarization exhibit well-sorted preferences. Curiously, however, this extant research has not grappled sufficiently with how pervasive perceptual biases might moderate the relationship between perceptions of elites and sorting. In this manuscript, I show that sorting is particularly responsive to perceived out-group dissimilarity, albeit in an asymmetric manner: perceived out-group dissimilarity corresponds to greater sorting for persons with right-leaning identities compared to those with left-leaning ones. I then analyze the 1992-1996 ANES Panel Study and find that these patterns mostly hold, with one caveat: sorting also shapes perceptions of out-group dissimilarity. These findings offer preliminary evidence of the existence of a feedback loop between perceptions of elites and sorting.

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Political preferences are, to some degree, learned. In particular, the political socialization literature implies that elites play a primary role in shaping citizens' attitudes and orientations (Gilens and Murakawa 2002). As Downs (1957, pg. 233) notes, the average person simply cannot be an expert in many areas of politics, so "he will seek assistance from men who are experts in those fields, have the same political goals he does, and have good judgment." This cue-taking underscores the leading explanation for sorting within the American mass public: when elites polarize, individuals receive clearer cues about the "correct" connection between their political preferences and adjust them accordingly (Levendusky 2009, pg. 39).

While intuitive, this logic is not without certain complications. First, the typical citizen lacks sophistication (Converse 1964; Kahan and Braman 2006). As a result, individuals struggle to conform to Downs' idealized logic of cue-taking, often relying, instead, upon symbolic or group-based cues to navigate the political landscape (Campbell et al. 1960; Bullock 2011). Second, citizens' spatial perceptions of elites are often biased and asymmetric. Not only does the average American tend to misperceive the extent of policy polarization (Levendusky and Malhotra 2016), but ideological placements of in-party and out-party elites and copartisans are not uniform (Ahler 2014).

These biases constitute a thorny problem for linking perceptions of elite polarization to sorting. In this manuscript, I argue that elite-based explanations of mass sorting should account for the tendency of group memberships to filter party placements in ideological space. Returning to the idea that the perceptual screen of partisanship is pervasive (Campbell et al. 1960; Westfall et al. 2015), I find that perceived out-group dissimilarity corresponds with greater sorting than comparative differences between the parties (i.e. "perceived polarization"). This effect, however, is asymmetric among party identifiers: Republicans who perceive maximal levels of out-group dissimilarity are better sorted than comparable Democrats. Finally, I conclude with an analysis of the 1992-1996 ANES Panel Study and find that these patterns hold with one caveat. Perceived dissimilarity yields greater downstream sorting among persons with right-leaning identities, yet sorting also shapes such perceptions. These findings constitute preliminary evidence for the existence of a feedback loop between perceptions of elites and sorting.

Elite cues and sorting

The accumulated wisdom regarding the development of citizens' preferences points to a general "elite cue theory," which suggests that mass opinion responds to elite discourse (e.g. Zaller 1992; Berinsky 2009; Lenz 2010; Brader, Tucker, and Duell 2012). While this logic underscores sorting – elites polarize, citizens recognize these compositional changes, and then sort accordingly – there is reason to suspect that individuals do not interpret elite cues uniformly. First, partisans do not evenly interact with informational sources (Stroud 2010). Second, individuals often expend energy counter-arguing evidence that is incongruent to their political preferences (Taber and Lodge 2006; Nyhan and Reifler 2010). This motivated reasoning dovetails with the observation that affective

biases fundamentally shape (mis)perceptions of basic ideological proximity (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012; Ahler 2014; Levendusky and Malhotra 2016; Iyengar and Westwood 2015; Westfall et al. 2015).

Consider traditional party placements in liberal-conservative space. In the 2012 ANES Time-Series survey, respondents perceived the out-group party to be almost 15 percent more extreme than they perceived the in-group party. If basic ideological placements of political parties are asymmetric, then it follows that perceptions of elite polarization – or the Euclidean distance between ideological placements of the parties – are biased downwards in the sense that, while *both* parties have objectively polarized, individuals do not recognize these changes evenly.¹ In turn, this asymmetry presents an obvious challenge for the conventional sorting calculus in that it may be the case that these perceptions are differentially related to sorting.

Social identity theory provides an alternative approach to engage the linkage between perceptions of elites and sorting. If partisanship is a particular form of social identity (Huddy, Mason, and Aaroe 2015), then prototypic group members (e.g. political elites) provide the archetype to which group members should pattern their preferences. This expectation, however, cuts both ways. Social comparisons also produce contrast effects between groups (Campbell 1967). Both Turner et al.’s (1987) and Brewer’s (1991) work, for example, implies that the categorization processes that distinguish in- from out-group membership motivate individuals to emphasize the distinctive features of out-groups in order to establish intergroup boundaries that separate peers from opponents.

While classic versions of social identity theory emphasize that individuals desire to emulate in-group prototypes (e.g. Tajfel 1959), more recent applications of social identity theory in political science find that out-group cues are particularly powerful (Goren, Federico, and Kittilson 2009; Nicholson 2012). Why? Consider, first, that social comparisons literally hinge on distinctiveness, or the features that allow for distinctions between groups (Brewer 1991). Second, Tversky’s (1977) work suggests that the illusion of out-group homogeneity – the perception that an out-group is uniformly undesirable – emphasizes the objectionable features of out-group members relative to the attractiveness of in-group characteristics. Finally, Atkinson’s (1986, pg. 132) work posits that these differences play an important evaluative role; because “similarity and difference are not related by a perfect inverse function, the question arises as to which is the more basic process. Perhaps the best way to answer this question is to consider which is more likely to be noticed. The tentative answer would be difference since the judgment reflects distinctive over common features.”

In the context of the linkage between elite cues and sorting, one productive way of thinking about how group memberships moderate perceptions of elite cues is to consider the features of in-

¹ It is true, however, that the parties have not polarized evenly (e.g. Bonica 2014). As I demonstrate below, this may factor into asymmetries in the extent to which Republicans and Democrats exhibit sorted preferences. I thank a reviewer for this point.

group similarity and out-group distinctiveness. In this case, sorting may be less a function of perceived differences between the parties than contrasts between the self and these groups – particularly given the “negativity” associated with out-groups (Iyengar, Sood and Llekes 2012; Mason 2015; Abramowitz and Webster 2016). Accordingly, I expect that individuals who perceive significant differences between themselves and their political opposition should exhibit well-sorted political preferences.

Data and method

To test whether group memberships moderate the relationship between perceptions of elites and sorting, I leverage the 1980-2016 American National Elections Studies (ANES) Time-Series and the 1992-1996 ANES Panel Study surveys. The outcome of interest in these analyses, *sorting*, follows Levendusky’s (2009) original coding. Individuals are asked to place themselves on a seven-point scale on each of the following items: aid to blacks, abortion, health insurance policy, whether government should provide jobs and a standard of living, defense spending, the extent of general government spending on social services, and liberal-conservative self-placement. Individuals who identify as a Democrat and who correctly chose “liberal” responses ranging from values 1 to 3 on a given question receive a value of (1); in the case of pairings where the placement does not “match” one’s partisanship, the value (0) is assigned. Likewise, Republicans who selected “conservative” responses ranging from values 4 to 7 are coded (1) for correct party-ideology matches and otherwise (0). To calculate a sorting score, I simply average together scores on all seven pairings. The resulting index ranges from 0, “not sorted on any item,” to 1, “sorted on all items.”

Perceptions of elites

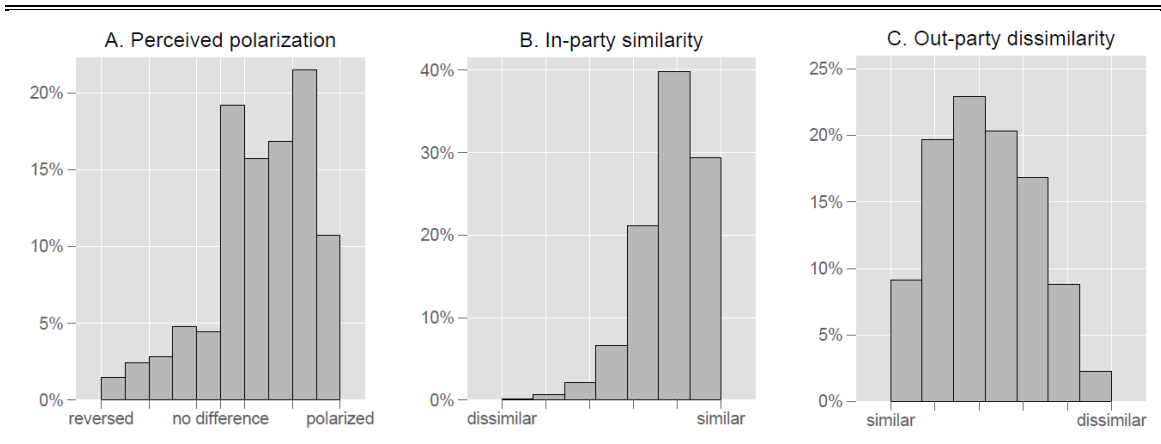
The ANES surveys ask individuals to place the Democratic and Republican Parties in liberal-conservative space. Responses to these items range from 1, “extremely liberal,” to 7, “extremely conservative.” To construct the first type of group assessment, *perceived party polarization*, I simply subtract a respondent’s Democratic Party ideological placement from the Republican one. This operation yields a variable that ranges from -6, which conveys that a respondent perceives that the parties are fully polarized, yet completely opposite of their “correct” ideological character, to 6, which conveys that the individual correctly identifies the parties’ ideology and views them as extreme. Values of or near zero, then, represent either perceiving the parties to be moderate or perceiving the parties to be effectively indistinguishable from each other. To ease the interpretation of this variable’s relationship to sorting, I have rescaled it to range from 0 to 1; the full distribution of responses is illustrated in Panel A, Figure 1.

Next, I disaggregate this “comparative” assessment into perceptions of in-party and out-party (dis)similarity. These items reflect the perceived distance between an individual’s own liberal-conservative self-placement and the corresponding placement of the in-party, the party to which

the respondent belongs, and out-party, the party with which an individual does not identify. Perceived *in-party similarity* is created by subtracting the liberal-conservative placement of an individual's party from her own ideological self-placement and taking the absolute value of the resulting score. I then rescale this item so that larger values reflect greater perceived ideological similarity. Values on this variable range from 0, maximum ideological differences between the self and in-group, to 1, which conveys no differences between self and in-group liberal-conservative placements. According to Panel B in Figure 1, most respondents believe that their in-party shares their own sense of ideological self-placement. Almost 70 percent of individuals fall into one of the two highest categories on this item.²

Perceived *out-party dissimilarity* is constructed by subtracting the liberal-conservative placement of an individual's out-party from their own self-placement and taking the absolute value of the resulting score. This transformation is necessary to ensure that Republican and Democrat identifiers' scores exist within common space and yields a variable that, after rescaling, ranges from 0, or no differences between self and out-group ideology, to 1, maximum differences between self and group ideology. Panel C in Figure 1 illustrates that the spread of values on this item is approximately normal, with fewer than five percent of all partisans perceiving maximum ideological differences between their and the out-party's liberal-conservative placement. Although there is no difference between Republicans' and Democrats' perceptions of in-party similarity, those persons with right-leaning identities perceive about 12% greater out-party ideological dissimilarity on average relative to persons with left-leaning identities. As Figure 2 illustrates, these differences jump dramatically in 2012, and I return to the implications of this asymmetry below.

Figure 1. Perceptions of the parties in liberal-conservative space

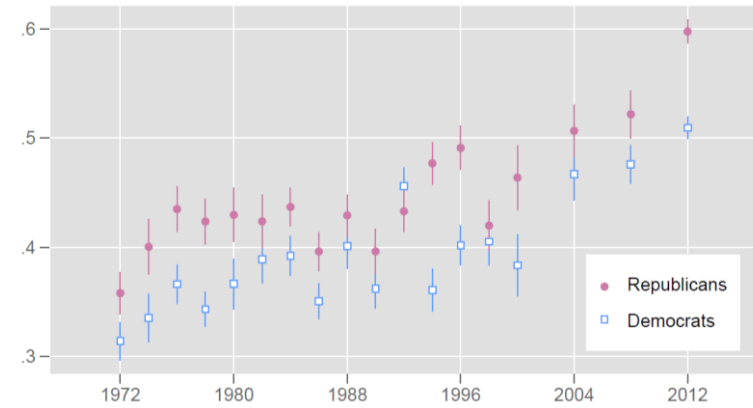


Source: 1980-2012 ANES

Notes: Estimates reflect unweighted distributions of scores in sample.

² Independents constitute a tricky population because they have no natural in-/out-group. As a result, I simply average together their perceived distance scores for both parties.

Figure 2. Perceived out-party dissimilarity by partisan group



Notes: Point estimates reflect mean out-group dissimilarity scores. Solid bands convey 95% confidence intervals surrounding estimates.

Controls

A number of control variables are employed. In light of the legacy of the Southern realignment, I include a dichotomous variable, *Old South*, for persons who reside in states that were originally included in the Confederacy. A respondent's *age* is measured in years, ranging from 17 to 99. *Educational attainment* conveys the highest level of schooling a respondent has undertaken and takes the form of a seven-part ordinal scale ranging from 0, "grade school," to 1, "graduate degree." The degree to which persons are *interested in politics* is coded 0 for "not much," 1 for "some," and 2 for "a lot." Because religion is deeply intertwined with political sorting, I account for the *religiosity* of respondents. Religiosity is a composite factor of church attendance, views on biblical inerrancy, and the importance of religion. Racial identification as *white* or *black* is coded 1, respectively, and 0 otherwise. To construct a measure of *political knowledge*, I combine party-policy placements – correctly placing Democrats to the left of Republicans on jobs, aid to blacks, and social welfare and defense spending – and knowledge of the House majority. This variable ranges from 0, answering no questions correctly, to 1, answering all questions correctly.

Results

Table 1 presents a series of models that depict the correlates of sorting. Model 1 portrays sorting as a function of perceived polarization. Here, the estimates conform with prior work: when individuals perceive that the parties are deeply divided, they exhibit greater sorting. Model 2 decomposes perceived polarization into perceptions of in- and out-group (dis)similarity. Two conclusions are warranted. First, recalling that variables have been rescaled to range from 0 to 1, the magnitude of the effect of perceived out-group dissimilarity on sorting ($b = 0.43$, $se = 0.01$) is

larger than that corresponding effect of perceived in-party similarity ($b = 0.22$, $se = 0.02$). Second, the net effect of perceived polarization (Model 1) is comparatively smaller than the effect of perceived out-party dissimilarity on sorting (Model 2).

Figure 3 illustrates the contours of these findings by plotting the coefficient estimates associated with in-group similarity and out-group dissimilarity over time. Unlike the pooled coefficient estimates presented in Table 1, each point estimate is derived from fitting a model to the data from the respective year in which it was collected. Aside from the observation that in-group assessments are often a weaker correlate of sorting than out-group ones, I find that the magnitude of these effects shift over time. Focusing on the effect of perceived out-group dissimilarity, the magnitude of the effect of perceiving maximum distance between the self and out-group party on sorting is almost 30% larger in 2016 relative to 1980. This observation tracks “objective” changes in elite polarization over this period of time. Although speculative, as elites have become more objectively divided in real time (e.g. McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal, 2006), the informational utility of these perceived dissimilarities seems to reflect these changes.³

Table 1. Elite cues and Partisan-Ideological Sorting

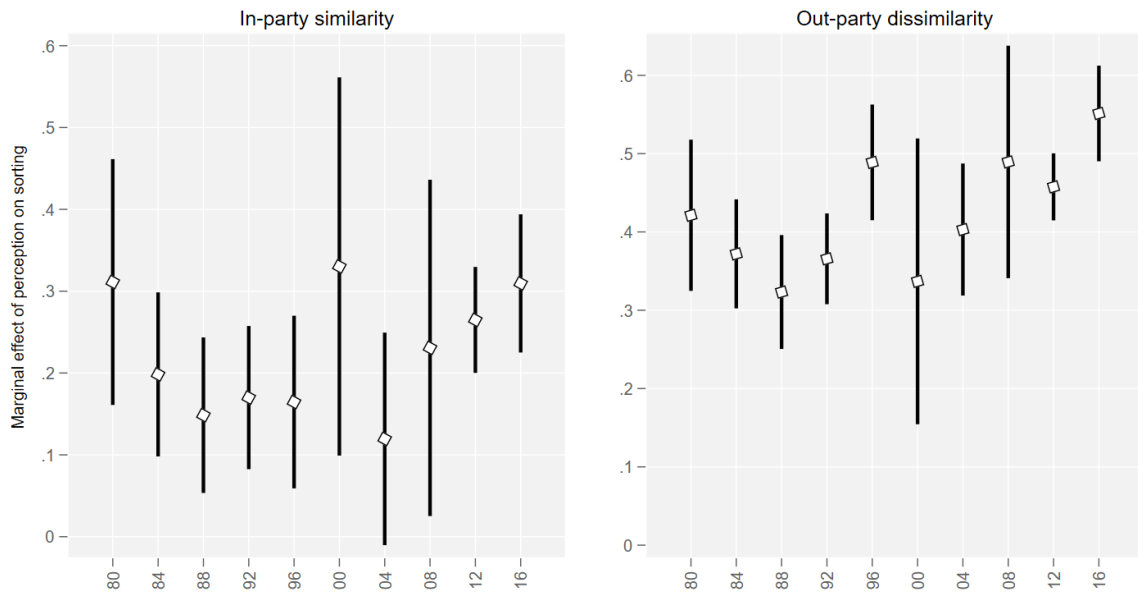
	(1)		(2)	
Perceived polarization	0.19**	(0.01)	-----	-----
In-party similarity	-----	-----	0.22**	(0.02)
Out-party dissimilarity	-----	-----	0.43**	(0.01)
Political interest	0.00	(0.01)	0.00	(0.01)
Knowledge	0.29**	(0.01)	0.21**	(0.01)
Education	0.06**	(0.01)	0.05**	(0.01)
Religiosity	0.04**	(0.01)	0.03**	(0.01)
Male	0.00	(0.01)	0.00	(0.01)
Income	0.01	(0.01)	0.01	(0.01)
Age	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)
White	0.02*	(0.01)	0.00	(0.01)
Black	0.05**	(0.01)	0.02*	(0.01)
Old south	0.00	(0.01)	0.00	(0.01)
Constant	0.12**	(0.02)	-0.02	(0.02)
R ²	0.109		0.226	
N	19,610		16,462	

Source: 1980-2012 ANES Time-Series Surveys

Notes: Model includes year fixed effects, which are relegated to accompanying supplementary materials; standard errors in parentheses are clustered by year. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

³ These results are robust to exchanging the liberal-conservative party placements with candidate-based ones.

Figure 3. The effect of perceived (dis)similarity on sorting, conditional on group membership



Source: 1980-2012 ANES Time-Series

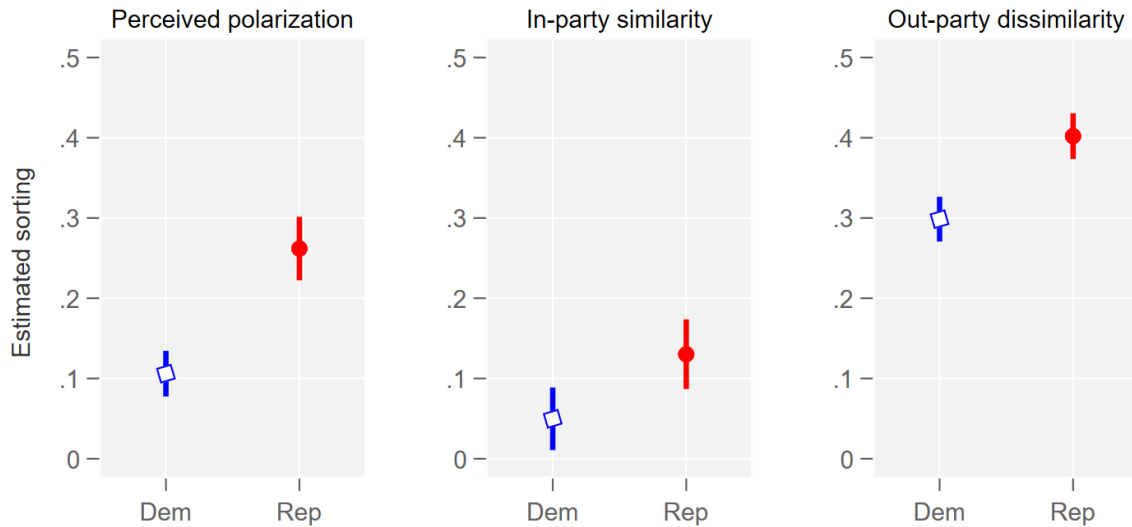
Notes: Point estimates convey effect of moving from minimum to maximum values on respective variables and are bracketed by 95 percent confidence interval bands. Originating regressions for each estimate can be obtained in Appendix. The confidence interval bands for year 2000 estimates are particularly wide because the ANES fielded a split-sample, experimental instrument for ideology. In turn, this results in a smaller sample of sorting scores.

While individuals who perceive stark ideological differences between themselves and the out-group party appear more likely to align their partisan and ideological preferences, it is an open question regarding whether this effect is uniform among partisans. Curiously, while a growing literature demonstrates sincere differences in the ideological foundations of the American political parties (e.g. Grossman and Hopkins 2016), no research has explored whether these asymmetries have implications for the linkage between perceptions of elite cues and sorting. As Figure 2 hints, however, there are meaningful differences between the average levels of ideological dissimilarity that Republicans and Democrats perceive. Might this have predictive consequences?

In Figure 4, I juxtapose a series of marginal effect estimates associated with perceived polarization, perceived in-party ideological similarity, and perceived out-party dissimilarity. Each point estimate illustrates the effect of moving from minimum to maximum values on the respective assessment. Across all three variables, Republicans exhibit greater sorting than Democrats. In the case of perceived out-group dissimilarity, these differences are profound – persons with right-leaning identities exhibit almost 30 percent more sorting than those with left-leaning ones. Given that Republicans prioritize ideological purity (e.g. Grossman and Hopkins 2016), their sensitivity to

perceived dissimilarities with the out-group party seems to particularly orient how they match their ideological to partisan preferences.

Figure 4. Effect of different permutations of perceptions of elites on sorting



Source: 2012 CANES Time-Series

Notes: Point estimates convey predicted sorting at change from minimum to maximum value on respective covariate for persons with right- and left-leaning identities. Solid bands bracketing point estimates convey 95 percent confidence intervals.

Untangling directionality

Implicit in the discussion of the relationship between these assessments and sorting is a causal arrow running from former to latter. Certainly some evidence exists that perceptions of elites (Levendusky 2009) and exposure to elite cues (Levendusky 2010) generates sorting. Yet, teasing out whether perceptions of in- and out-group (dis)similarity *cause* sorting is difficult with observational data. To gain leverage on this question, I turn now to the 1992 to 1996 ANES Panel Study.

In general, panel data are particularly useful to explain whether a variable collected at one point explains later change at a second point in time – a modeling approach known as a cross-lagged design (Finkel 1995). In this case, I model observed sorting in 1996 as a function of in-group similarity and out-group dissimilarity at 1992, in addition to sorting’s lagged 1992 value. In turn, I also analyze perceived out-group dissimilarity in 1996 as a function of such perceptions in 1992, as well as the extent to which a person was sorted at the earlier survey wave. Presenting these models side-by-side, we can assess whether perceived out-group dissimilarity causes sorting or the reverse – whether sorting exacerbates perceived out-group dissimilarity.

Table 2. Cross-lagged panel models of sorting and out-group dissimilarity

	Sorting 1996		Sorting 1996		Out-party dissimilarity 1992	
Sorting 1992	0.42**	(0.06)	0.39**	(0.06)	0.10**	(0.03)
Pid3	-----	-----	0.32**	(0.09)	-----	-----
Out-group dissimilarity 1992	0.01	(0.01)	0.12**	(0.02)	0.34**	(0.07)
Sorting 1992 x 3 category PID	-----	-----	-0.01	(0.10)	-----	-----
In-group similarity 1992	0.00	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.00)
Knowledge	0.14*	(0.07)	0.13**	(0.06)	0.07	(0.06)
White	0.01	(0.05)	0.05	(0.05)	0.03	(0.02)
Black	0.00	(0.04)	0.00	(0.03)	0.03	(0.02)
Female	-0.03	(0.03)	-0.01	(0.03)	0.01	(0.02)
Education	0.02	(0.01)	0.02	(0.01)	0.01	(0.00)
Constant	0.08	(0.07)	0.04	(0.08)	0.22**	(0.06)
N	435		435		419	
R ²	0.29		0.29		0.30	

Source: 1992-1996 ANES Panel Study

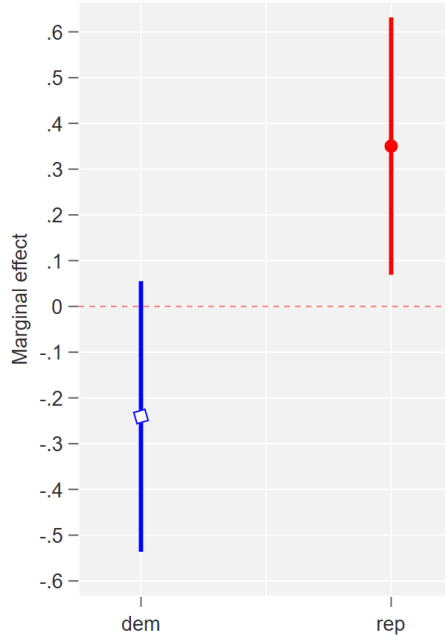
Notes: Values rescaled to range from 0 to 1. Standard errors in parentheses.

Table 2 presents a series of estimates derived from these Granger causality tests (c.f. Granger 1969). In the first model, while lagged sorting is clearly predictive of later sorting, perceived out-group dissimilarity does not exert a statistically distinguishable effect on sorting. However, drawing on thrust of the earlier analyses, the second model disaggregates these cues by respondents' partisan identity. Figure 5 plots the estimates from the resulting interaction term, which reveal that individuals with right-leaning identities who perceived significant differences between the out-group and their own ideological identity at time 1 were much more likely to possess well-sorted identities at time 2.⁴

These estimates comport with the idea that sorting is responsive to perceptions of elites, albeit in a textured manner. Yet, it is also worth exploring whether sorting at time 1 bears any relationship to perceived out-group dissimilarity at time 2. In the third model, lagged out-party dissimilarity predicts later (downstream) assessments regarding such dissimilarity. Further, there is evidence that a feedback loop between sorting and perceptions of elites exists – moving from minimum to maximum values of sorting exerts a modest shift in the extent to which individuals perceive out-group dissimilarity. Although this effect is more modest than the effect of out-group dissimilarity on sorting, it nevertheless implies that sorting factors into how individuals see out-group parties.

⁴ Regarding in-group similarity, no such differences manifested. The results of those analyses are available in the supplementary materials.

Figure 5. The effect of perceived out-group dissimilarity on sorting over time



Source: 1992-1996 ANES Panel Study

Notes: Point estimates convey effect of moving from minimum to maximum values on perceived out-group dissimilarity at 1992 on sorting in 1996. Estimates are bracketed by 95% confidence interval bands.

Conclusion

Scholarly interest in sorting has increased dramatically over the previous decade (e.g. Levendusky 2009; Mason forthcoming). The primary explanation for these changes draws on the idea that perceived polarization conveys information that facilitates the matching of ideology to partisanship. This manuscript, however, demonstrates that this linkage is more nuanced.

Why are individuals more likely to conform to the political characteristics of their in-group when they perceive that their political opponents deviate from their own group’s preferences? Self-categorization theory conveys that contextual comparisons between reference groups and the individual are efficient means for processing information quickly (Atkinson 1986). Given the desire for positive social distinction (Turner et al. 1987) and the evaluative importance of group differences (Taylor 1981), comparisons between the self and reference groups may shape conformity among preferences beyond the recognition of between-group differences (e.g. Hogg, 1996; Turner et al., 1987).

Yet, while Baltasar Gracián’s admonition that “A wise man gets more use from his enemies than a fool from his friends” proves prescient, the effect of perceived out-group dissimilarity on sorting is not uniform. In fact, these assessments of elites correspond to asymmetric levels of sorting

among partisans: persons with combinations of right-leaning identities exhibit greater levels of sorting than persons with left-leaning ones. This finding fits well with the growing acknowledgement that American party politics are riddled with such asymmetries. Expanding on Freeman’s (1986) early work, Grossman and Hopkins’ (2016) argue that Republicans appear to organize around thematically-central ideological principles, while Democrats reflect a loose coalition of social groups. Elsewhere, Bonica’s (2014) work on scaling the ideological preferences of political activists reveals pervasive differences between the extent to which Republican elites have become more conservative and Democrats more liberal. These differences even spill into the behavior of elected officials (Mann and Ornstein 2012), which, according to the logic of sorting, should be noticed by ordinary partisans. Given the compositional and behavioral differences inherent in the expression of this ideology, it is sensible that persons with right-leaning identities would be more sensitive and draw greater utility from perceived out-group dissimilarity.

It is important to note, however, that the inclusion of the panel data complicates this linkage. Recent work indicates that the strength of one’s political preferences can have a direct effect on the nature of assessments regarding political divisions (e.g. Westfall et al. 2015). Indeed, the results depicted in the final series of analyses suggest that sorting exerts an effect on downstream perceptions of ideological dissimilarity. As such, perceptions of elites vis-à-vis sorting may be prone to a feedback loop of sorts: individuals translate cues into actionable information, which, in turn, shapes how that information is processed.

These findings are not a cause for optimism. While some have argued that a “positive” “benefit” of polarization is that it better informs the electorate, sorting reinforces perceived divisions among citizens. Further, these findings imply that citizens may discount the ideological extremity exhibited by their own party. Indeed, if sorting is most responsive to perceived out-group dissimilarity, then there may be little incentive for in-group politicians to moderate their tone. Given the behavioral ramifications of sorting (Mason 2015; Davis and Mason 2016), the instrumental incentives that drive individual and elite behavior in spatial models of politics may be less binding in this context than other work predicts. In this way, sorting may problematize the representational link between citizens and elites by drawing attention to out-group threat rather than in-group responsiveness.

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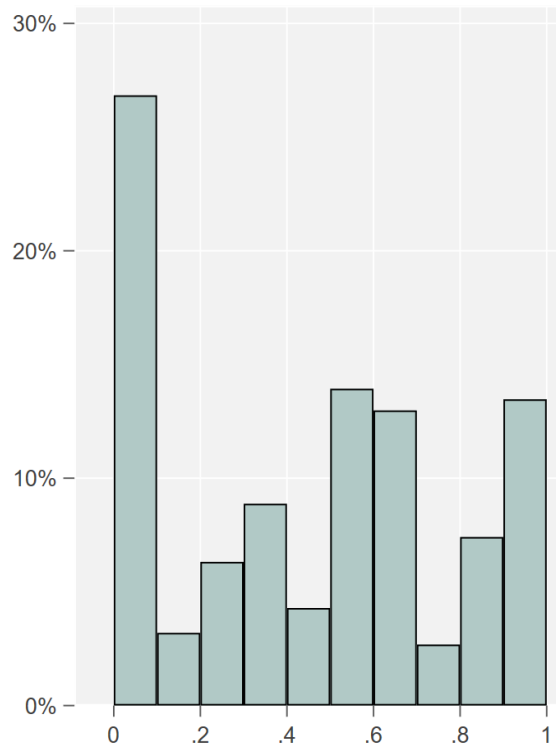
Supplementary materials

Table A1. Summary statistics for variables modeled in Table 1

	observation				
	s	mean	std dev.	min	max
Sorting	18,654	0.48	0.31	0	1
Out-party dissimilarity	18,425	0.69	0.21	0	1
In-party similarity	18,654	0.81	0.17	0	1
Political interest	18,449	0.44	0.25	0	1
Knowledge	17,934	0.52	0.37	0	1
Education	18,654	0.45	0.29	0	1
Religiosity	18,440	0.68	0.30	0	1
Male	18,654	0.58	0.31	0	1
Income	18,654	0.49	0.50	0	1
Age	17,559	0.50	0.28	0	1
White	18,580	46.67	16.94	17	93
Black	18,654	0.78	0.42	0	1
Old south	18,654	0.12	0.33	0	1

Source: 1980-2012 CANES Time-Series

Figure A1. Distribution of sorting scores in the CANES



Notes: Sorting scores range from 0 – no ideology items match an individual’s partisanship – to 1 – all items match an individual’s partisanship. Scores have been binned into deciles and reflect unweighted frequencies.

Table A2. Full model output for Table 1

	Model 1		Model 2	
Perceived polarization	0.19	(0.01)	-----	-----
In-group similarity	-----	-----	0.22	(0.02)
Out-group similarity	-----	-----	0.43	(0.01)
Political interest	0.00	(0.01)	0.00	(0.01)
Knowledge	0.29	(0.01)	0.21	(0.01)
Education	0.06	(0.01)	0.05	(0.01)
Religiosity	0.04	(0.01)	0.03	(0.01)
Male	0.00	(0.01)	0.00	(0.01)
Income	0.01	(0.01)	0.01	(0.01)
Age	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)
White	0.02	(0.01)	0.00	(0.01)
Black	0.05	(0.01)	0.02	(0.01)
Old south	0.00	(0.01)	0.00	(0.01)
1980	0.00	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.01)
1984	0.07	(0.01)	0.00	(0.01)
1986	-0.01	(0.01)	0.05	(0.01)
1988	0.06	(0.01)	0.00	(0.01)
1990	0.05	(0.01)	0.05	(0.01)
1992	0.00	(0.01)	0.03	(0.01)
1994	0.09	(0.01)	0.00	(0.01)
1996	0.09	(0.02)	0.07	(0.01)
1998	0.10	(0.02)	0.08	(0.01)
2000	0.05	(0.01)	0.10	(0.02)
2004	0.16	(0.02)	0.04	(0.01)
2008	0.03	(0.01)	0.11	(0.02)
Constant	0.12	(0.02)	-0.02	(0.02)
obs	0.1093		0.2263	
r2	19,610		16,462	

Source: 1980-2012 CANES Time-Series

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses, clustered by year. *p<0.05, **p<0.01

Table A3. OLS regression models for Figure 3

	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
In-party similarity	0.31** (4.07)	0.20** (3.88)	0.15** (3.07)	0.17** (3.81)	0.16** (3.06)	0.33** (2.81)	0.12 (1.81)	0.23* (2.20)	0.26** (8.02)	0.31** (7.19)
Out-party dissimilarity	0.42** (8.57)	0.37** (10.48)	0.32** (8.72)	0.37** (12.38)	0.49** (12.99)	0.34** (3.63)	0.40** (9.39)	0.49** (6.47)	0.46** (20.96)	0.55** (17.70)
Political interest	0.01 (0.29)	0.05* (2.00)	0.03 (1.23)	0.03 (1.15)	0.09** (3.31)	0.13 (1.88)	0.05 (1.45)	0.07 (1.21)	-0.08** (4.87)	0.02* (2.38)
Knowledge	0.20** (3.09)	0.16** (4.58)	0.17** (5.89)	0.23** (5.37)	0.25** (3.34)	-0.02 (0.22)	0.29** (6.62)	0.03 (0.16)	0.24** (8.89)	0.11** (3.25)
Education	0.09* (2.00)	0.04 (1.24)	-0.01 (0.31)	0.04 (1.60)	0.05 (1.58)	0.11 (1.27)	-0.01 (0.33)	0.10 (1.45)	0.03 (1.43)	0.00 (0.79)
Religiosity	-0.00 (0.04)	-0.06* (2.10)	0.06* (2.11)	-0.01 (0.21)	0.03 (1.01)	0.02 (0.23)	0.03 (1.05)	0.09 (1.47)	0.05** (3.28)	0.17** (4.27)
Male	-0.04 (1.61)	0.01 (0.38)	0.00 (0.16)	-0.01 (0.59)	0.01 (0.53)	-0.01 (0.31)	0.01 (0.72)	0.04 (0.95)	0.00 (0.06)	-0.00 (0.14)
Income	0.04 (0.94)	-0.02 (0.68)	-0.05 (1.35)	0.00 (0.17)	-0.01 (0.39)	-0.03 (0.34)	0.02 (0.64)	0.09 (1.19)	0.02 (1.04)	0.00 (0.56)
Age	0.00 (0.54)	-0.00** (2.67)	-0.00** (3.19)	-0.00* (2.34)	-0.00 (1.70)	-0.00 (0.95)	-0.00** (3.33)	-0.00 (0.95)	-0.00** (2.69)	-0.00** (3.53)
White	-0.07 (1.56)	0.02 (0.55)	-0.03 (0.99)	0.02 (0.67)	0.03 (0.95)	-0.03 (0.56)	-0.02 (0.67)	0.03 (0.57)	0.00 (0.19)	0.02 (1.17)
Black	-0.00 (0.04)	0.08* (1.98)	-0.01 (0.20)	0.09* (2.49)	0.03 (0.72)	-0.04 (0.39)	-0.08* (2.09)	0.04 (0.58)	-0.01 (0.29)	-0.02 (0.55)

Source: 1980-2012 CANES Time-Series

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses, clustered by year. *p<0.05, **p<0.01

Table A3. OLS regression models for Figure 3, continued.

	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
Old south	-0.05 (1.91)	-0.01 (0.36)	0.01 (0.29)	0.01 (0.43)	-0.02 (0.79)	0.09 (1.83)	0.04* (2.02)	-0.03 (0.75)	-0.01 (0.65)	0.01 (0.39)
Constant	-0.08 (0.90)	0.09 (1.45)	0.19** (3.23)	0.07 (1.28)	-0.00 (0.04)	0.04 (0.28)	0.14* (2.02)	-0.12 (0.99)	-0.06 (1.40)	-0.18** (3.06)
R ²	0.20	0.21	0.19	0.20	0.27	0.12	0.30	0.15	0.30	0.32
N	700	1,131	1,003	1,376	1,152	427	768	649	4,897	2,652

Source: 1980-2012 CANES Time-Series

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses, clustered by year. *p<0.05, **p<0.01

Table A4. Interaction effects and the 1992-1996 ANES Panel

	Sorting 1996		Out-party dissimilarity 1996	
Sorting ₁₉₉₂	0.39**	(0.06)	0.09**	(0.03)
3-category PID ₁₉₉₂	0.07*	(0.02)	0.02	(0.03)
PID x Sorting	-----	-----	-0.00	(0.04)
Perceived in-party similarity ₁₉₉₂	-0.01	(0.01)	0.00	(0.01)
PID x In-party similarity	0.00	(0.01)	-----	-----
Perceived out-party dissimilarity ₁₉₉₂	0.11	(0.11)	0.34**	(0.07)
Political knowledge	0.14*	(0.07)	0.07	(0.05)
White	0.04	(0.05)	0.04*	(0.02)
Black	-0.01	(0.04)	0.03	(0.02)
Female	-0.02	(0.03)	0.01	(0.02)
Education	0.02	(0.01)	0.01	(0.00)
Constant	-0.02	(0.09)	0.20**	(0.07)
R ²	0.271		0.31	
n	435		419	

Source: 1992-1996 ANES Panel Study

Notes: In Model 1, in-party similarity does not have an effect on sorting in 1996 for either Republicans or Democrats. In Model 2, the effect of sorting on downstream perceived out-party dissimilarity does not vary by PID. Standard errors in parentheses; *p<0.05, **p<0.01

Table A5. Robustness check; exchanging lib-con placements of parties with candidates

In-party similarity	0.28	(0.02)
Out-party dissimilarity	0.47	(0.02)
Political interest	-0.01	(0.03)
Knowledge	0.21	(0.03)
education	0.04	(0.01)
Religiosity	0.03	(0.01)
Male	0.00	(0.00)
Income	0.02	(0.01)
Age	0.00	(0.000)
White	0.00	(0.01)
Black	0.02	(0.01)
Old south	0.00	(0.010)
1980	-0.10	(0.01)
1984	-0.12	(0.02)
1988	-0.11	(0.02)
1992	-0.07	(0.01)
1996	-0.04	(0.01)
2000	-0.03	(0.01)
2004	-0.07	(0.01)
2012	-0.11	(0.02)
Constant	0.02	(0.03)

Source: 1980-2012 ANES Time-Series

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$