

# Revisiting *The Partisan Sort*: How Identity Sorting Differs from Issue Sorting

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## Abstract

Prior work on partisan sorting struggles to explicate the relationship between sorting and polarization and muddles how policy attitudes and liberal-conservative ideology relate to partisanship. In this manuscript, I argue that a faithful depiction of sorting ought to not only reflect matching between ideology and partisanship, but the strength of those preferences—thereby contextualizing sorting within the larger conversation regarding mass polarization. While the average citizen may connect their ideological preferences to their partisan ones, these preferences rarely exhibit levels of extremity consistent with polarization. Further, unlike past research that combines sorting on attitudes and identities together, I demonstrate that partisan sorting is multifaceted. While identity and issue sorting are related, they constitute distinct constructs. In sum, I argue for a more nuanced view of sorting within the mass public.

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*...all measurement is theory testing.  
Therefore, measurement always constitutes  
a tentative statement about the nature of  
reality.*

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Jacoby (1999, pg. 271)

## 1 Introduction

For a vast majority of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the mass public was not particularly adept, much less principled, at enunciating its political preferences (Achen and Bartels, 2004; Cohen, Noel and Zaller, 2004; Snyder and Stromberg, 2010). By the late 1990s, however, a new partisan voter had manifested (Miller and Shanks, 1996; Bafumi and Shapiro, 2009)—one that was not only more ideological than its forebears, but whose issue preferences were more strongly rooted within a liberal-conservative framework (Baldassarri and Gelman, 2008). Citizens had sorted (Levendusky, 2009).

At its core, the concept of sorting reflects the ordering, if not coherency of individuals' preferences—long a central interest in studies of public opinion. In fact, while scholars have puzzled over the stability (Feldman, 1988; Lenz, 2012) and consistency of individuals' political attitudes (Sniderman and Bullock, 2004; Achen, 1975; Zaller and Feldman, 1992), the relationship between preferences within belief systems has received special consideration (Converse, 1964, 2000). Why this interest? Aside from academic curiosity in the nature of mass opinion, there are serious implications regarding whether or not a mass public's preferences adhere to some sort of overarching framework. As Feldman (2003, pg. 478) ominously warns, "Politics doesn't seem to "work" without some structure that allows broad sets of policies to somehow go together. And democratic representation may depend on people having some understanding of that structure."

While Americans' political preferences are not known for the quality of their structure (Myers, Lupton, and Thornton, 2015; Barber and Pope, 2015), the fault lines that demarcate Republicans and Democrats have nevertheless crystallized over the previous two decades (Pew, 2014). In turn, the scholarly attention to the coherence of public opinion has shifted from the interdependence of political beliefs, to the extent

to which ideological preferences map onto partisan affiliation. By this account, the mass public seems considerably more coherent than otherwise portrayed: extant work shows that Democrats and Republicans have sorted across a staggering array of social, economic, and racial preferences (e.g. DiMaggio, Evans, 1996; Evans, 2003; Fiorina and Abrams, 2008; Bafumi and Shapiro, 2009; Levendusky, 2009; Mason, 2015).<sup>1</sup>

Problematically, however, the prevailing work on sorting has ignored warnings that policy attitudes and liberal-conservative identity are not interchangeable forms of “ideology” (e.g. Conover and Feldman, 1981; Malka and Llekes, 2010; Devine, 2015). Consider Levendusky’s (2009, pg. 4) *The Partisan Sort*, which represents the single comprehensive text on party sorting in American politics. He writes (emphasis mine):

I focus here on indicators of ideology—respondents’ liberal-conservative self-identification and their issue positions on a variety of different policies. While there is some controversy about the self-identification measure in the literature (Conover and Feldman, 1981), I use it here as a summary indicator of the respondent’s outlook on politics (for similar uses, see Zaller, 1992; Hetherington, 2001; Sniderman and Carmines, 1997). *Using both measures together will allow me to demonstrate that sorting is not simply an artifact of a particular measure.*

Yet, the conceptual, much less empirical, expression of sorting is very much the product, if not an “artifact” of these underlying indicators. While there is some conceptual overlap between ideological self-identification and issue-based ideology, a growing body of work conveys that these are distinct facets of ideology (Malka and Llekes, 2010; Devine, 2015)—that these instruments are not so similar that they can be exchanged as substitutes or even treated as direct analogs.

In this manuscript, I show how these differences problematize this early work on sorting. I begin by revisiting how scholars traditionally understand sorting and theorize why an accurate depiction of partisan sorting must not only account for

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<sup>1</sup> This literature describes this sorting in various ways: the correspondence between ideology and partisanship has been termed “issue partisanship” (LeBlanc and Merrin, 1979), between-population polarization (DiMaggio, Evans, and Bryson, 1996), partisan polarization (Abramowitz and Saunders, 2008), and party polarization (Layman, Carsey, and Horowitz, 2006). This lack of terminological agreement has contributed to some of the confusion between sorting and polarization (see also: Garner and Palmer, 2011).

matching between ideology and partisanship, but the strength (extremity) of those preferences. When matching is contextualized in light of preference extremity, the extent of sorting within the mass public appears more modest than extant work depicts.

Next, I decompose sorting into identity and issue-based constructs. While prior work has isolated identity sorting as a quantity of interest (e.g. Mason, 2015; Davis and Dunaway, 2016), no extant work comparatively explores whether and why identity and issue sorting are separable. I find that, while the correlation between these forms of sorting is modest, there is little systemic evidence at the individual level to suggest that individuals' policy attitudes become more or less well-matched to partisanship over time. In contrast, however, I show that citizens' liberal-conservative and partisan identities do exhibit signs of convergence.

To further demonstrate the differences between identity and issue sorting, I investigate how political acumen or knowledge is related to such sorting. In particular, I explore the connection between sorting and what individuals know about ideological space—where the parties and their policies “fit” in the ubiquitous left-right dimension. Predictably, the extent to which political knowledge affects sorting is contingent upon the type of information in question: familiarity with left-right ideological space exerts a much larger effect on identity relative issue sorting, while correctly placing the parties on issues exerts a larger effect on policy relative identity sorting.

Taken together, the evidence presented here reveals two findings. First, partisan sorting is multifaceted. While identity and issue sorting are not orthogonal, they are appreciably distinct, which comports with a growing body of research that differentiates between instrumental and identity-based political preferences (e.g. Malka and Llekes, 2010; Ellis and Stimson, 2012; Huddy, Mason, and Aaroe, 2015). Second, rethinking how sorting is measured provides a way in which to contextualize sorting within ongoing debates about mass polarization. While the average citizen may connect their ideological preferences to their partisan ones, these preferences rarely exhibit levels of extremity consistent with polarization. As such, I argue for a more nuanced view of partisan sorting within the mass public.

## 2 What is sorting?

Sorting reflects the systematized arrangement of things by some predetermined criterion. For example, partisans might sort by geographic location (Bishop, 2008; Mummolo and Nall, 2016) or within their social relationships (Huber and Malhotra, 2017). In this application, we are interested in whether attitudes, values, beliefs, and identities, are correctly categorized according to ubiquitous left-right political framework. In other words, individuals are sorted when their ideological preferences fall to the “right” (“left”) of moderate *and* they profess to be a Republican (Democrat).<sup>2</sup>

However, while this definition embodies the matching inherent in prevailing work on sorting (e.g. Levendusky, 2009), it fails to account for a second dimension of the survey response: extremity. This omission is problematic insofar as it constitutes the primary reason for why sorting and polarization are often conflated—Noel (2014) writes, for example, that “Polarization is about more than just sorting, but sorting is polarization anyway.” While Fiorina (2012) agrees that the two processes of sorting and polarization are not mutually-exclusive, the existing literature struggles to explicate their differences. Indeed, he goes on to note that, “Of all the misconceptions associated with discussions of political polarization, none is more common than the confusion between party sorting and polarization” (2).

Hazarding the risk of pedantry, a major problem with a firm distinction between sorting and polarization rests on the fact that the extant literature dichotomizes individuals’ partisan and ideological preferences to identify whether an individual is sorted. As Levendusky (2009, pg. 44-45) writes, a citizen is sorted “when his position is on the same side of moderate as that of his national party elites—a sorted Democrat takes a liberal position; a sorted Republican takes a conservative one.” Yet this seems to be a gross simplification regarding the true nature of one’s preferences. In fact, individuals identify as “strong” or “weak” ideologues and hold opinions that similarly range in strength—in other words, they vary in *the degree* to

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<sup>2</sup> Presumably, it is also possible for Independents / moderates to be “sorted,” insofar as these neutral categories match.

which they identify as a liberal or a conservative or *the degree* to which they support decreasing or expanding the government spending.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 1 illustrates why a matching-only approach to sorting is problematic, and, in the process, reveals why matching on attitudes and identities may constitute fundamentally different forms of sorting. Here, I pair respondents' defense spending preferences and ideological self-identification with their self-reported partisan affiliation. A cursory glance at Panels A and B in Figure 1 reveals that there is a noticeable “V” shape to the distribution of matching on these items. In other words, there appears to be robust levels of sorting on these ideological preferences. Republicans generally favor increasing defense spending (conservative response), while Democrats prefer decreasing such spending (liberal response); similarly, Republicans overwhelmingly identify as conservatives and Democrats as liberals.

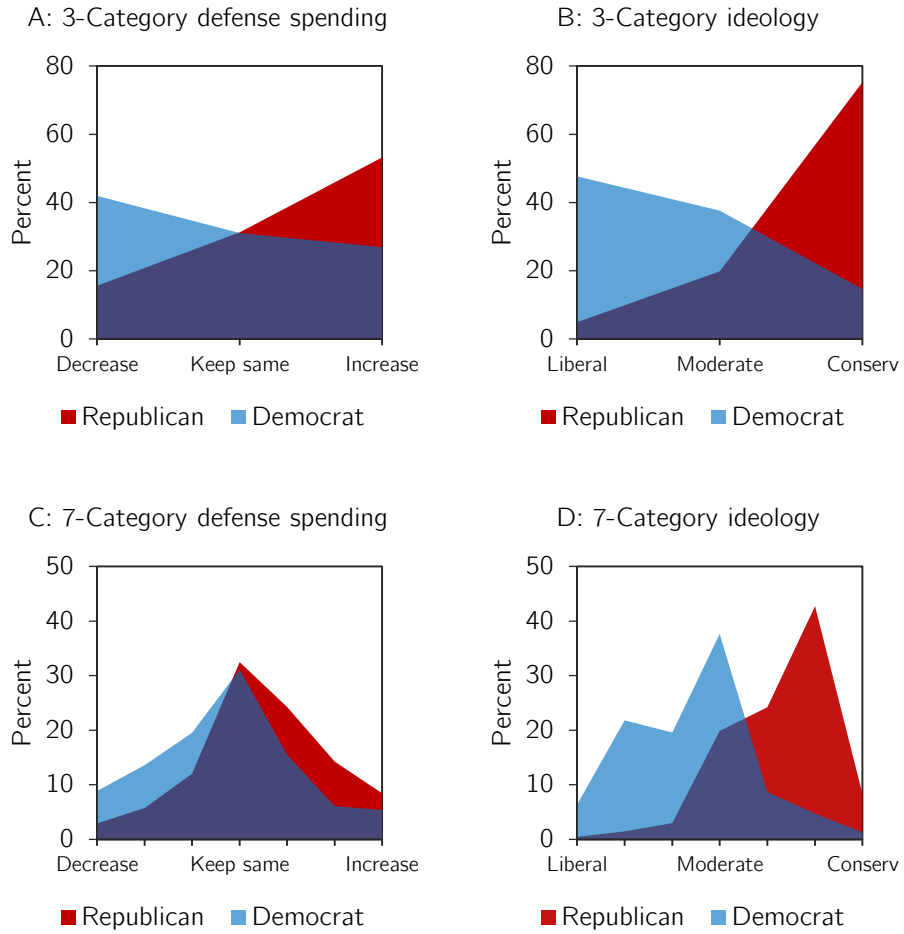
Yet, aggregating responses to these items hemorrhages substantive information about their full relationship to partisanship. As Panel C illustrates, the modal category of partisans' defense spending preferences is actually the neutral, midpoint response “keep spending the same.” Further, the vast majority of correctly-sorted preferences cluster around the midpoint of this scale—partisans may espouse the correct response on balance, but they rarely possess extreme views regarding defense spending (fewer than 10 percent of Republicans and Democrats comprise the strongest category of “correct” preferences).

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<sup>3</sup> This is not a purely semantic distinction. For instance, this scheme cannot differentiate between the matching of “weak” and “strong” ideological preferences to an individual's partisanship. Instead a Republican who possesses weak conservative preferences across, say, the extent of government spending and the provision of public healthcare, is considered as “sorted” as a Republican who espouses extremely conservative opinions across those items, respectively. Yet if variation within these preferences exists, then an appropriate conceptualization of sorting should not only capture simple categorization but also the strength of those attendant relationships, more faithfully capturing the extent to which a person is sorted. Although research examining partisan-ideological sorting *does* account for the strength of these identities (e.g. Mason, 2015; Davis and Mason, 2015), it doesn't theorize why these distinctions are important or consider how they shape sorting across policy preferences.

Figure 1. Sorting on Defense Spending and Liberal-Conservative ID



Source: 2012 ANES Time-Series survey

Notes: Partisan groups aggregate “strong,” “weak,” and “leaner” categories of identification.

Panel D, like Panel C, illustrates that the simple expression of sorting-as-matching obscures meaningful variation in how partisans are distributed across liberal-conservative identity. A different portrait of sorting emerges here in that the distribution of partisans across liberal-conservative identification is essentially bimodal, where responses are skewed away from the middle of the scale (although, as elsewhere noted, a plurality of Democrats self-identify as moderates). While there is not a perfect “V” shape to the distribution of responses—the existence of which would be indicative of matching (sorting) *and* extremity (polarization)—the fit between partisanship and ideological identity is stronger than defense spending preferences ( $r = 0.60$  and  $r = 0.28$ , respectively).

The benefit of conceptualizing sorting in the terms of Panels C and D is twofold. First, these illustrations convey that Americans are not particularly “polarized” in that their responses to survey items tend to only modestly skew toward the distributional extremes. Second, by extension, they indicate that individuals are not uniformly sorted on different types of ideological preferences. If Fiorina (2012, pg. 3) is correct in asserting that “sorting is more often a compositional phenomenon—rather than change their views, the categories to which people belong change,” then the relationship between liberal-conservative and partisan identification may be qualitatively different than the connection between policy attitudes and partisanship.

Why is it problematic that the prevailing theoretical and empirical operationalization of sorting has traditionally weighted ideological self-identification equivalent to attitudinal ideological preferences? Because it conflates, in the parlance of Ellis and Stimson (2012), a symbolic, or identity-based, form of ideology with an operational, or attitudinal-based, one. This is a vital distinction. They write that

symbolic ideology is a representation of how citizens think about themselves: whether they consider their views to be liberal, conservative, moderate, or something else. Operational ideology is grounded more explicitly in concrete decisions, what citizens think the government should or should not be doing with respect to important matters of public policy (2012, pg. 11).



Although these concepts are closely intertwined at the elite level—conservative elites support conservative policies, and liberal elites, liberal ones (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal, 2006; Lupton, Myers, and Thornton, 2015)—at the individual level, “it is another matter entirely” (Ellis and Stimson, 2012, pg. 11; Hill and Tausanovitch, 2015). If individuals’ attitudes do not conform to a unidimensional framework (e.g. Feldman and Johnston, 2014), then this absence of systematic ordering has implications for the relationship between ideology and partisan identity. *In particular, sorting on ideological attitudes (i.e. policy preferences) ought to be distinct from sorting on ideological identity (i.e. the groups to which people belong).*

## **2.1 Identity sorting**

The justification for parceling identity sorting into a unique construct begins with the premise that ideological self-placement—a “representation of how citizens think about themselves: whether they consider their views to be liberal, conservative, moderate, or something else” (Ellis and Stimson, 2012, pg. 11)—resembles a form of social identity (Devine, 2015). Within social psychology, an identity comprises conceptualizing the self as a member of a particular category, a process termed “self-categorization” (Terry, Hogg, and White, 2000; Turner, 1991). A given identity exists at a certain place and time and is, at least partially, a function of the cultural and discursive contexts that are unique to that time and place (Huddy, 2001). For example, “categorizing oneself as a “conservative’ will...constitute a social identity when one’s self-perception as conservative is experienced as a point of similarity with other ingroup members and as a point of collective difference with outgroup members” (Malka and Llekes, 2010, pg. 160). In this telling, the particular meaning of the ideological self-concept conveys an emotive, symbolic attachment to a particular ideological group.<sup>4</sup> Thus, given the

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<sup>4</sup> It is possible—likely, even—that these attachments are at least partially rooted in issue preferences. For example, “I feel attached to conservatives *because* I support limited government” or “I feel attached to liberals because I am pro-choice.” In other words, this approach does not argue that identification is devoid of meaning derived from issue stands; rather, that such identification carries emotional significance beyond a simple aggregation of issues.

corresponding tendency to describe partisanship as a form of social identity (Greene, 2000; Huddy, Mason, and Aaroe, 2015), the shared variance between these two political self-descriptions should be significant.

To construct a measure of identity sorting, I first construct a measure of overlap between partisan and ideological identification. I then take the product of the resulting overlap term and the “strength” of the two identity items used to generate that value (c.f. Mason, 2015). To generate the overlap between identities, we simply subtract a respondent’s score on ideology from their score on partisanship and take the absolute value of the resulting number to account for the degree to which a person’s preferences are matched.

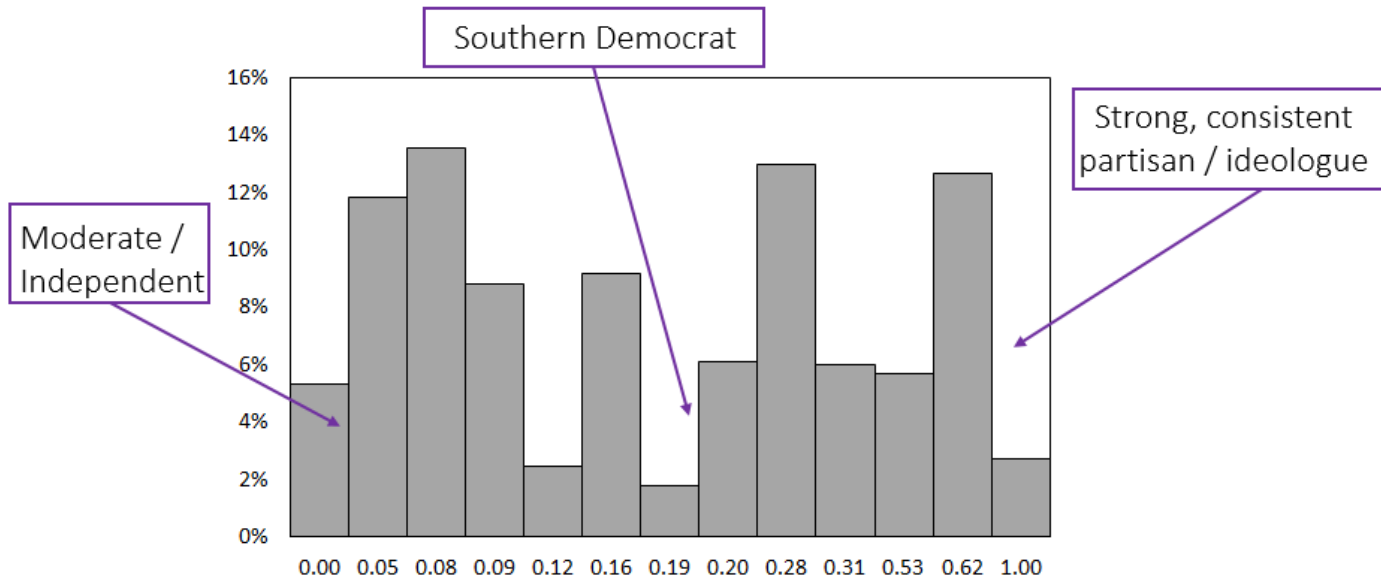
$$overlap = abs(PID - IDEO) \tag{1}$$

Empirically, if partisanship and ideology are scored on seven-point scales, ranging from low values (left-leaning: Democrat, liberal) to high ones (right-leaning: Republican, conservative), then complete overlap or perfect “sorted-ness” computes to zero—for example, scoring a seven on ideology (i.e. extremely conservative) minus a score of seven on partisanship (i.e. “strong Republican) yields a score of zero. Conversely, a person who exhibits extraordinarily low overlap would yield a high value according to this equation: subtracting the value 1 on partisanship (i.e. “strong Democrat”) from the value 7 on ideology (i.e. “extremely conservative”) produces a score of 6 . To reclaim a more sensible ordering of these values, we simply reverse-order them and then add “1” to these scores so that perfect overlap takes the highest value (7) and the least overlap the smallest value (1).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> I add “1” to these scores because multiplying the value “0” by the forthcoming strength measures will naturally constrain all scores to a value of 0. If an individual scores a 0 as a function of strong, countervailing preferences, we are unable to recover the effects of the strength of those constituent preferences because multiplying a value of 0 by any integer will remain 0.

Figure 2. Distribution of Identity-based Sorting Scores



Source: ANES Time-Series, 1984-2012

Notes: Variables have been rescaled to range from 0 (unsorted) to 1 (perfectly sorted).

Having accounted for the extent of overlap between identities, we should now account for the extremity of them. To do this, we will multiply the overlap score by the “strength” of these attachments, which requires folding the identity variables at their midpoint. Here, the moderate / Independent categories take the value of 1, weak identification the value 2, moderate identification, 3, and, finally, strong group attachments a value of 4. After multiplying the overlap score by these strength values, I then rescale the measure of sorting to range from 0 to 1. Thus, this final score represents the degree of the overlap between an individual’s identities multiplied by the strength or extremity of both of those items.

$$\textit{identity sorting} = \textit{overlap} \times \textit{PID strength} \times \textit{IDEO strength} \quad (2)$$

Figure 2 displays the distribution of sorting scores. The scale is anchored by those persons who classify themselves as “pure” Independents *and* “pure” ideological moderates (0). As values increase, a number of things occur: 1) identities transition from neutral to one-sided, be that Republican (Democrat) or conservative (liberal), and 2) the correspondence or overlap between identities increases. Middling values, then, are indicative of moderately strong and cross-cutting identities (e.g. conservative Democrat), while higher values convey very strong and matching identities (e.g. conservative Republican). Unlike the discrete measure popularized by Levendusky (2009) in *The Partisan Sort*, which scores matching identities as “1” and all other combinations “0,” this coding scheme is theoretically sensible across empirical values and produces a metric of sorting that fully expresses the different combinations that these identities may take.

## 2.2 Issue sorting

Although partisanship can be construed as a form of social identity, other research describes it as a “running tally of retrospective evaluations of party promises and performance” (Fiorina, 1981, pg. 84). This account places particular importance on the connection between partisanship and issues, bolstered by recent work that finds that

partisanship now contains a stronger issue-based foundation than previous years (Bafumi and Shapiro, 2009; Abramowitz, 2010).<sup>6</sup> In this case, citizens function as good “Bayesians” who update their political affiliation according to experiential evidence (Achen, 1989; Gerber and Green, 1998).

As such, partisanship should conceivably match to particular policy preferences. In particular, having peeled away liberal-conservative identity, we are now left with a series of issues that include respondents’ attitudes toward the government provision of healthcare, the scope of government and defense spending, the role of government in providing jobs and aid to minorities, rates of legal immigration, and the propriety (legality) of abortion and same-sex marriage. Taken together, these items contribute to a form of ideology that is “grounded more explicitly in concrete decisions, what citizens think the government should or should not be doing with respect to important matters of public policy” (Ellis and Stimson, 2012, pg. 11). In other words, these are the particular beliefs, attitudes and opinions that populate the network of an individual’s belief system.

Operationalizing a policy-based approach to sorting is relatively straightforward using the ANES Time-Series issue placements because the response sets for those items resemble the same seven-category ones that comprise both ideological identity and partisanship. In this case, we wish to first account for the overlap between an individual’s partisan affiliation and their issue preference on a given policy issue. Because both partisanship and the individual issues are measured using seven-category, ordinal scales, the values of which can be roughly interpreted as ranging from liberal to conservative responses, generating a measure of overlap requires simply adhering to the coding scheme outlined in the previous section. We then simply

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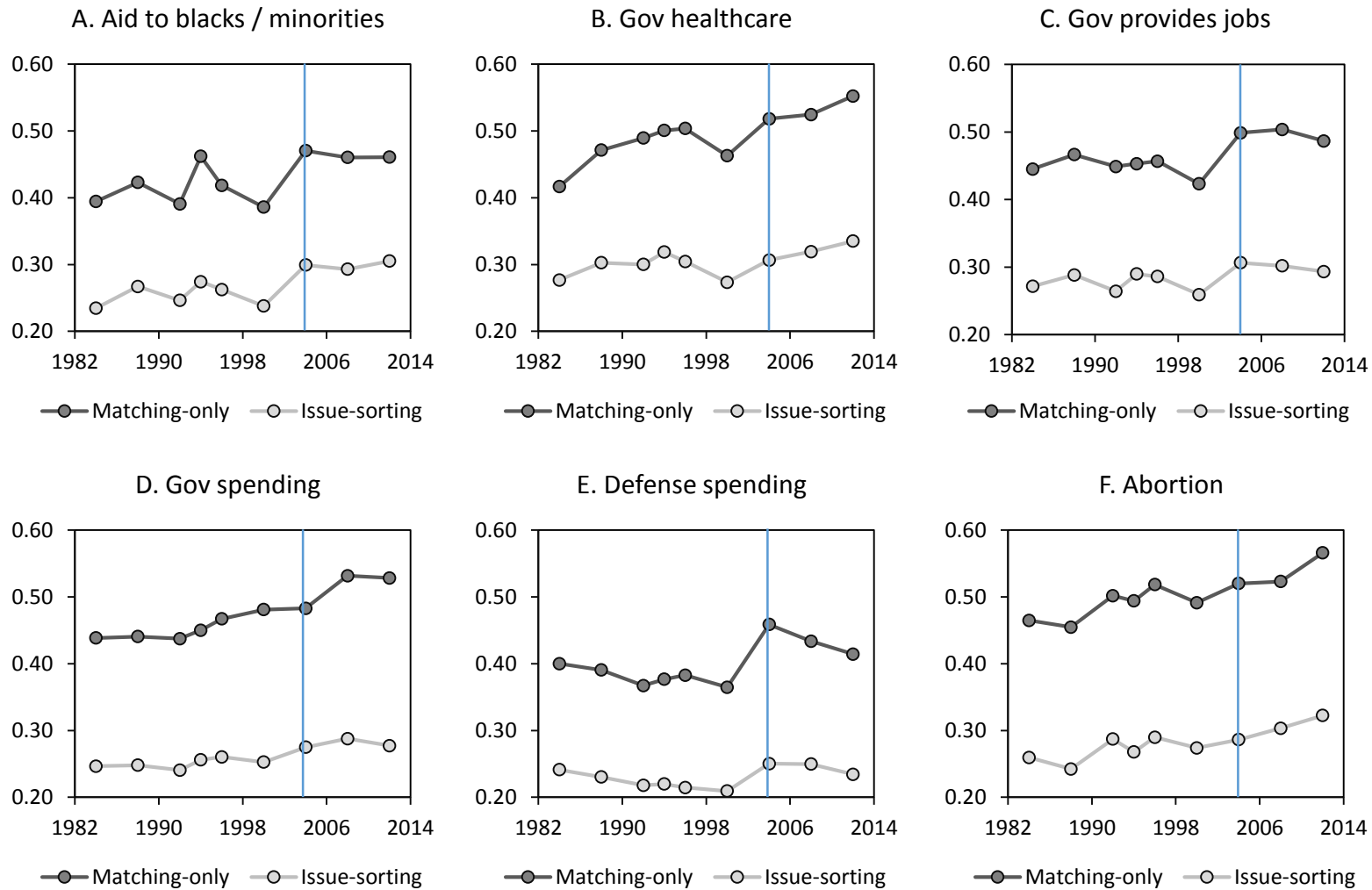
<sup>6</sup> Lost in the ensuing years, however, Campbell and colleagues (1960) did warn against caricaturizing partisanship as comprised of only emotional ties. They noted that while partisanship appeared to influence attitudes more than attitudes influenced partisanship, this finding was conceivably restricted to the time-period of inquiry and not necessarily generalizable beyond that narrow window (1960, pgs. 133-135).

multiply this overlap value (eq. 3) by the strength of the issue attitude and partisanship (eq. 4).

$$\begin{aligned} \text{overlap}_{n \text{ policy}} &= \text{abs}(\text{issue placement} - \text{PID placement}) \\ \text{issue sorting}_{n \text{ policy}} &= \text{overlap} \times \text{PID strength} \times \text{policy strength} \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

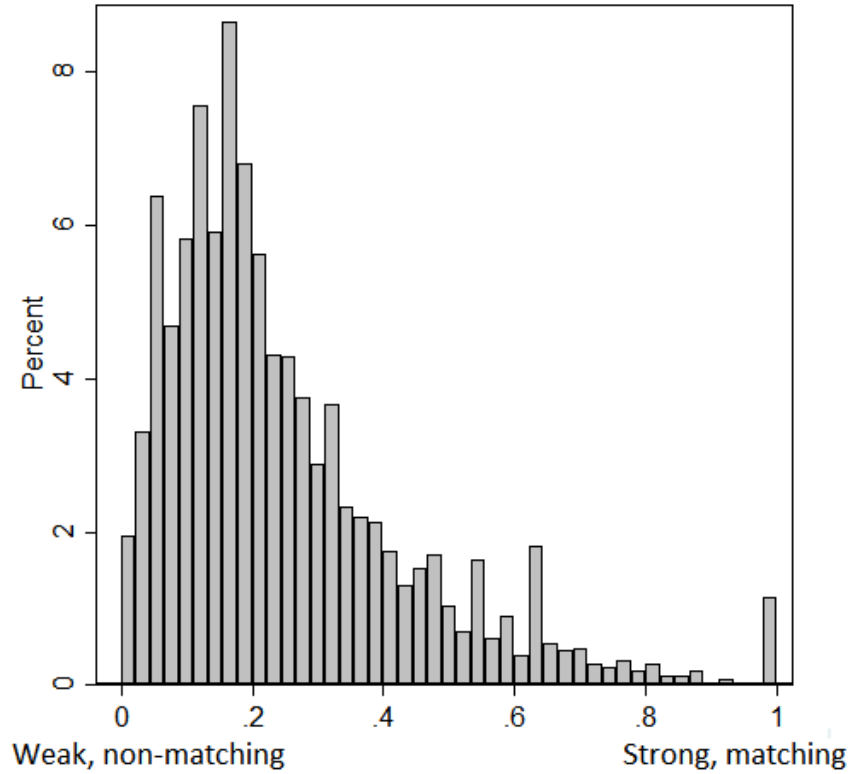
Figure 3 displays a series of six illustrations that juxtapose the *issue sorting* score outlined above with a *matching only* one that reflects the percentage of respondents who took the correctly-matched position of their party (how sorting (3) issues has been measured in prior work). In each panel, the solid vertical line indicates the final year of data analyzed in Levendusky’s (2009) *The Partisan Sort*. While there is a modest, if not consistent, upward trajectory in the degree to which respondents match their issue position with their partisanship, the percentage of respondents espousing party-consistent positions never exceeds 60 percent on any of the six items. Further, the issue-sorting score on each policy-partisanship pairing is appreciably modest—although the average person may, on balance, espouse the party-correct issue position, the actual strength of such sorting belies greater moderation than we might otherwise expect. By integrating strength *and* sorting, then, we are able to better contextualize what the full distribution of the survey response tells us about the extent of sorting within the mass public.

Figure 3. The relationship between partisanship and policy preferences over time



Notes: Estimates weighted by population weights. Y-axis is interpreted differently for the different variables. For “matching-only” estimates, y-axis conveys percentage of people correctly matching policy to PID. For “issue-sorting,” estimate conveys mean value (on scale ranging from 0 to 1). Estimates weighted by population weights. Solid vertical line indicates where data in Levendusky (2009) ends.

Figure 4. Distribution of issue sorting scores



Source: ANES Time-Series, 1984-2012

Notes: Issue sorting index includes partisanship-issue pairings on aid to minorities, defends spending, healthcare, abortion, government spending, and jobs.

Having developed issue sorting scores across a variety of individual policy domains, I now turn to creating an index of issue-based sorting that reflects the total sorting across these various policy items. In theory, this composite variable should reflect a type of cohesiveness within an individual's ideological worldview in that this item encompasses the extent to which an individual is able to make connections or abstractions between their partisanship and many policy preferences. The aggregate measure of issue sorting presented in Figure 4 accounts for both the overlap between partisanship and ideological preferences and the extremity (or strength) of these items. Combining the separate issue sorting items together results in an index that ranges that also ranges from 0 to 1 (see eq. 5).



$$\sum_{n_{policy}}^{\infty} f(issue\ sorting\ score) \quad (5)$$

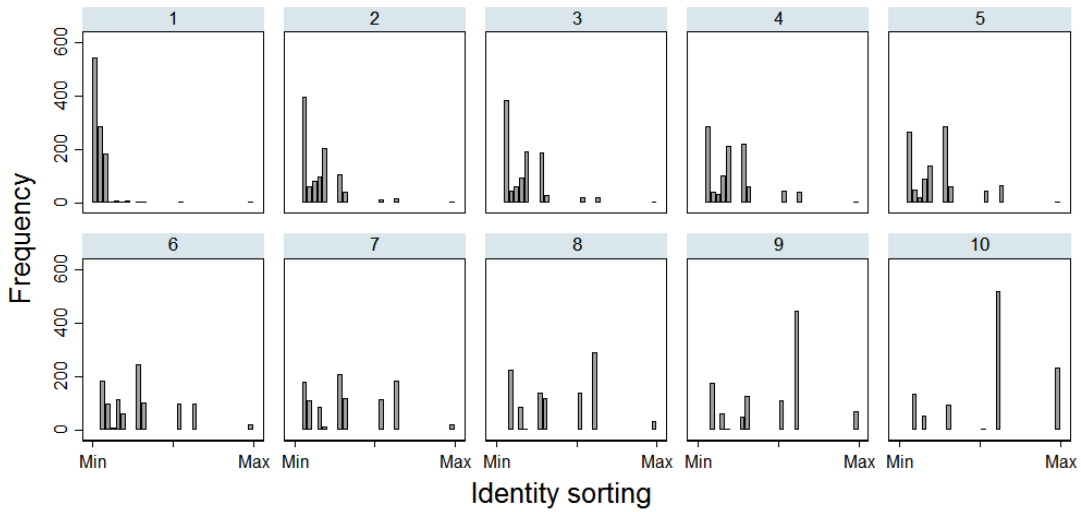
As scores transition from minimum (0) to maximum values (1), not only does overlap or matching increase, but so, too, does the extremity of these underlying considerations. In other words, this variable more appropriately accounts for Independents with moderate views, “confused” partisans whose attitudes appear to be the function of simple random selection, cross-pressured partisans with a variety of strong, countervailing views on policy, and sophisticated, strong partisans with highly-consistent opinions.

### 2.3 Analyzing the relationship between identity and issue sorting

What is the relationship between policy and identity sorting? Figure 5 presents the bivariate relationship issue and identity sorting. Here, issue sorting scores have been transformed into deciles, which comprise each individual pane. A histogram displaying the number of respondents in each category of identity sorting is arrayed along the x-axis. Predictably, the relationship between the two constructs is positive. Low levels of issue sorting correspond with low levels of identity sorting; as issue sorting scores increase from the first to tenth decile, the distribution of identity sorting scores generally shifts toward the upper threshold of values, which implies that greater sorting on issues accompanies more well-sorted identities.

Yet this relationship is not monotonic. Consider that the distribution of identity sorting in the second through fifth deciles of issue sorting looks remarkably similar; so, too in deciles six through eight. Indeed, even among the most well-sorted on issues, there is significant variance in the strength of identity sorting (Panel 10). As a result, the correspondence shared by issue and identity sorting is appreciably modest in the aggregate ( $r = 0.57$ ).

Figure 5. Identity sorting scores by issue sorting decile



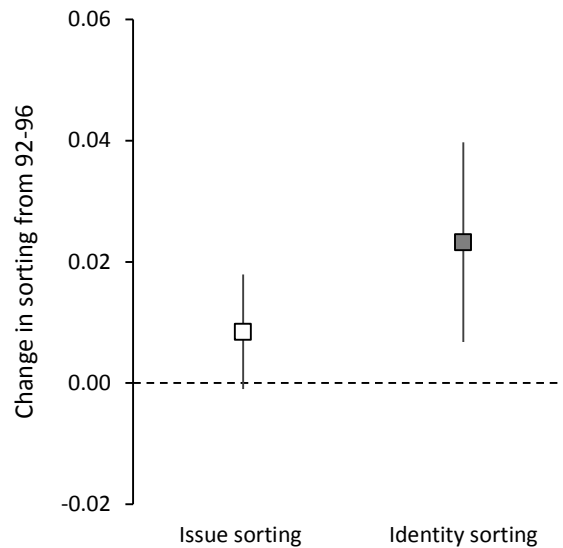
Source: 1984-2012 ANES Time-Series surveys

Notes: Issue sorting scores have been transformed into deciles. Panels portray histogram of identity sorting scores ranging from minimum to maximum levels.

To gain leverage regarding how partisanship and ideology covaries over time, I turn to the 1992-1996 ANES Panel Study, which provides the opportunity to observe changes in sorting among the same cohort of individuals over a period of four years. Figure 6 presents a set of point estimates that illustrate changes a respondent's identity and issue sorting from 1992 to 1996. I find that the average change in issue sorting is a little less than one point, although the difference is not significant by virtue of the confidence interval's lower bound crossing the 0.00 threshold. However, the change in identity-based sorting from 1992 to 1996 is statistically significant, representing roughly an eight percent increase in sorting. Further adding an interesting wrinkle to the claim that these forms of sorting are appreciably different, the Pearson's correlation coefficient between identity and issue sorting in 1996 is actually weaker ( $r = 0.21$ ) than in 1992 ( $r = 0.33$ ). Thus, while the correlation between identity- and issue-based sorting has increased in the aggregate, the individual-level estimates imply that the passage of

time does not inevitably beget concomitant changes in the relationship between ideological attitudes and identities and partisanship.<sup>7</sup>

Figure 6. Changes in respondent issue and identity sorting, 1992 to 1996



Source: 1992-1996 ANES Panel Study

Notes: Point estimates are difference-in-difference change in sorting from 1992 to 1996. Solid lines represent 95 percent confidence intervals.

### 3 Different sorting, different correlates

Having defined and explored the compositional relationship between identity and issue sorting, the data indicate that, while these items are clearly related, they seem to constitute different facets of the relationship between ideology and partisanship. One way of further teasing apart these differences is to consider whether the correlates of

<sup>7</sup> In part, this is probably a function of issue sorting containing greater measurement error as a function of averaging six items together (as opposed to identity sorting constituting a single ideology-partisanship pairing). But be that as it may, that actually serves to emphasize why peeling apart identity from issue sorting is necessary insofar as the aggregation of many issue sorting scores together may not be ideal.

these forms of sorting vary. In particular, how does familiarity with political space and party platforms affect sorting?

### **3.1 Sorting and the left-right space**

An impressive body of literature demonstrates that at least one major ideological dimension reliably structures political discourse across a variety of mature democratic contexts: the generalized “left-right” continuum (e.g. Gross and Sigelman, 1984; Kroh, 2007). This axis bifurcates political conflict into countervailing “left” and “right” spaces, which take their meaning from a variety of socio-cultural and economic forces (Inglehart and Klingemann, 1976). Conceptually, it is customary to interpret the left-right distinction as one that juxtaposes equality, autonomy, and openness to change— emblematic of the “left”— with the preservation of the status quo, the exercise of control, and a general tendency to resist change— emblematic of the “right” (Piurko, Schwartz, and Davidov, 2011; Jost, Federico, and Napier, 2009). While these are broad generalizations, this left-right scheme is an elegant solution for simplifying and comparing complex, multilayered realities (Maier, 2007) and functions as an efficient mechanism through which citizens and elites communicate (Fuchs and Klingemann, 1990).<sup>8</sup>

Still, the degree to which this space accurately embodies political conflict and discourse varies across contexts. In fact, as Maier (2007, pg. 211-212) writes, “while European or Anglo-American voters, observers, and even political actors themselves may be happy to use the terms left and right, it is not always [clear] that they all share the same meaning of the terms.” In locations where the left-right dimension is less salient, it is generally the case that some other, well-established schema orients the dominant political culture. In the United States, for example, the “liberal-conservative”

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<sup>8</sup> While it is true that elites generally employ these terms, Fuchs and Klingemann (1990) demonstrate that a not insubstantial proportion of the mass public are able to understand the meanings of “left” and “right,” although this is highly contingent upon education (this matches other empirical findings that convey that politically-sophisticated individuals are usually more adept at understanding these labels, e.g. Sniderman et al. [1991]).

dimension is the prevailing scheme that structures such conflict. However, over time, the language of the “left-right” ideological space has been increasingly overlaid onto this liberal-conservative schema (Laponce, 1981; Conover and Feldman, 1981).<sup>9</sup> As Jost and colleagues (2009, pg. 311) write, “it is becoming increasingly common to substitute ‘liberal’ and ‘conservative’ for ‘left’ and ‘right,’ respectively.”

If the left-right ideological space serves a collective purpose, then it functions as a symbolic frame of reference that orients individuals to political groups. Given the close correspondence between the left-right and liberal-conservative spaces, successfully navigating one space ought to be related to understanding the other and, by extension, identity sorting (which is composed of such symbolic orientations). While this expectation does not preclude a relationship between left-right orientations and issue-based sorting—for example, left-right placements generally predict issue positions (Huber, 1989)—prior research finds that “symbolic factors clearly played a more important role than issue positions in determining the evaluation of ideological labels” (Conover and Feldman, 1981, pg. 634). This research has two implications for the present study. First, successfully understanding where the parties fit within this space ought to predict greater identity relative issue sorting. Second, I expect that the effect of “correctly” understanding one’s self-placement within this left-right scale should beget greater identity- relative issue based sorting (in part, because this requires understanding the underlying logic of sorting in the first place).

### **3.1.1 Operationalizing left-right ideological space**

Because scholars of American politics are primarily interested in the liberal-conservative ideological framework, survey instruments that capture how citizens think about the left-right dimension of politics are rare (unlike surveys in other parts of the West, where the left-right ideological framework is the prevailing dimension that

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<sup>9</sup> Beginning in the early and mi-1970s, the terms “left” and “right” were increasingly used to describe the symbolic distinction between liberal and conservative political approaches, in part thanks to the Nixon and McGovern campaigns (Inglehart 1989, pg. 367).

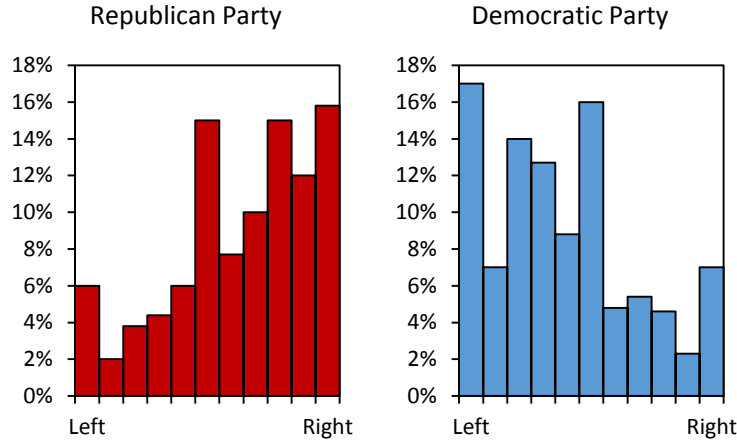
structures ideological conflict). Fortuitously, however, the 2012 ANES Time-Series survey appended a series of questions that capture this information as part of a module sponsored by the Cooperative Study of Electoral Systems. Two separate questions ask individuals to place the Republican and Democratic Parties in left-right space, while a third requests individuals to select where their own political preferences fit within this continuum. Values for all three variables originally span an 11-point continuum, ranging from 0 “left” to 10 “right.”

Figure 7 illustrates where respondents place the parties and themselves within left-right space. Predictably, a majority of individuals associate the Republican Party with the “right” label and the Democratic Party with the “left.” However, while the average individual reliably understands where the parties fit within this space, there is still a modest proportion of people who either a) do not perceive that the parties are very “extreme,” much less b) are able to correctly place the parties at all.<sup>10</sup> For purposes of analysis, I reverse-code the Democratic Party placements so that “left” (correct) responses correspond to higher values; this allows them to exist in common space with Republican Party placements in that higher values convey both “correct” and “more extreme” placements. These variables are both rescaled to range from 0, “strong, incorrect placements,” to 1, “correct, strong placements.”

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<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, the correlation between these placements and the traditional “liberal-conservative” party placements is modest at best. The weighted correlation between Democratic Party left-right and liberal-conservative placements is  $r = 0.45$ , while the correlation between Republican Party placements is  $r = 0.38$ . Moreover, even among sophisticates (respondents in the highest category of political knowledge), the correlation between these items is not substantially different. Presumably, these concepts are overlapping insofar as they should both reflect an individual’s understanding of the connection between ideological labels and the parties, yet it is difficult to claim that the average person treats these labels as interchangeable.

Figure 7. Party placements in left-right space



Source: 2012 ANES Time-Series

Notes: For Panels 1 and 2, x-axis represents where respondents place individual in left-right space prior to transformation into “correct” placements. In Panel 3, the x-axis conveys the extent to which respondent’s own self-placement in left-right space matches partisan self-placement. Estimates weighted according to population weights.

### 3.1.2 Results

Table 1 presents a series of models that depict sorting as a function of left-right placements and controls. In the first set of columns, I analyze how correct placement of the parties and correct self-placement in left-right space contributes to “partisan sorting,” a metric of sorting that accounts for how liberal-conservative identification *and* policy attitudes match to partisanship. This variable closely resembles Levendusky’s (2009) specification of sorting. The key difference, here, however, is that the underlying components of this variable are all operationalized according to my definition of sorting that accounts for both matching and extremity. Thus, the magnitude of any given coefficient is roughly comparable across models given that the dependent variables are both coded to range from 0 (minimum sorting) to 1 (maximum sorting).

Table 1. The effects of left-right ideological placements on partisan, issue, and identity sorting

	Partisan sorting (issues + identity) (1)	Issue sorting (2)	Identity sorting (3)
Correctly place Democrats in left-right space	0.01 (0.03)	0.04 (0.02)	0.11** (0.03)
Correctly place Republicans in left-right space	0.16** (0.03)	0.05* (0.02)	0.10** (0.03)
Political knowledge	0.11** (0.02)	0.06** (0.01)	0.08** (0.02)
Interest	0.10** (0.02)	0.12** (0.01)	0.17** (0.02)
Evangelical ID	0.01 (0.01)	0.05** (0.01)	0.06** (0.01)
Education	0.08 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.06 (0.04)
White	0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.01)	0.04 (0.02)
Black	0.06* (0.03)	0.05** (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)
Income	-0.02 (0.02)	0.03 (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)
Male	-0.04** (0.01)	-0.02** (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)
Age	-0.00** (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Constant	0.26** (0.04)	0.15** (0.02)	-0.06 (0.03)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.06	0.08	0.13
N	4,935	4,926	4,521

Source: 2012 ANES Time-Series

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



In Model 1, I observe that, while correctly placing the Republican Party in left-right space is related to an increase in partisan sorting, placements of the Democratic Party exert no discernible effect on this item. Recalling that these party placements vary from 0 to 1, a person who perceives that the Republican Party is maximally located toward the “right” end of the left-right spectrum is 16 points more sorted than a person who misperceived that Republicans were very “left.”

On its face, this evidence suggests that accurate placement on the political parties in left-right ideological space is strongly related to an individual’s propensity to sort. However, when we disaggregate issue from partisan sorting in Model 2, the magnitude of these coefficients shift precipitously. The effects of correct Republican Party and respondent self-placements on issue sorting is roughly 60 smaller. To what can we attribute these changes?

The answer lies in the relationship between these left-right placements and identity sorting. Given the close correspondence between left-right and liberal-conservative ideology, identity sorting should be especially sensitive to how individuals navigate symbolic ideological space. Indeed, both sets of party and the individual self-placements within left-right space exert sizeable effects on the extent to which individuals’ political identities converge in Model 3.<sup>11</sup> Not only is the size of the coefficients for the party placements in the identity sorting models larger relative to those in the analyses of issue sorting, but the model fit is considerably more efficient.

These differences, however, are easily obscured. In fact, partisan sorting artificially overstates the relationship among partisanship, issue preferences, and the left-right space. Whatever images Americans conjure up when they think about ideology in terms of “left” and “right”, the way in which they navigate this space informs connections between ideology and partisanship in different ways. Simply,

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<sup>11</sup> Of additional note is the extent to which the data explain the total variance in the dependent variable. Disaggregating partisan sorting into its constituent issue- and identity-based parts actually increases the total variance explained by the included covariates.

understanding the left-right ideological dimension increases identity-based sorting considerably more than it does sorting on issues.

### **3.2 Parties, issue positions, and sorting**

The prior section indicates that sorting does not happen in a vacuum—some degree of familiarity with the structure that gives ideology its meaning is a minimum informational requirement for sorting to “work.” By extension, if an individual neither knows nor understands where the parties stand on a bundle of salient public policies, then it is unlikely that that person would be able to logically connect their own preferences back to their partisan identity. Let us next turn to an exploration of the relationship between what individuals know about the party politics and sorting.

For the better part of three decades, the ANES Time-Series surveys have queried individuals about the policy approaches associated with and preferred by the Republican and Democratic Parties. Much like the policy self-placements that are fundamental to the composition of sorting, respondents are asked to place where they think the parties fall on a bivalent continuum of policy prescriptions that juxtaposes a “liberal” and “conservative” policy solution. While these responses have been used to generate subjective impressions of party extremity (e.g. Davis and Dunaway, 2016), they have also been treated as a form of objective political knowledge: the parties have a quantifiable preference to a range of issues and knowing something about these issues is indicative of a facet of political acumen or knowledge (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1993).

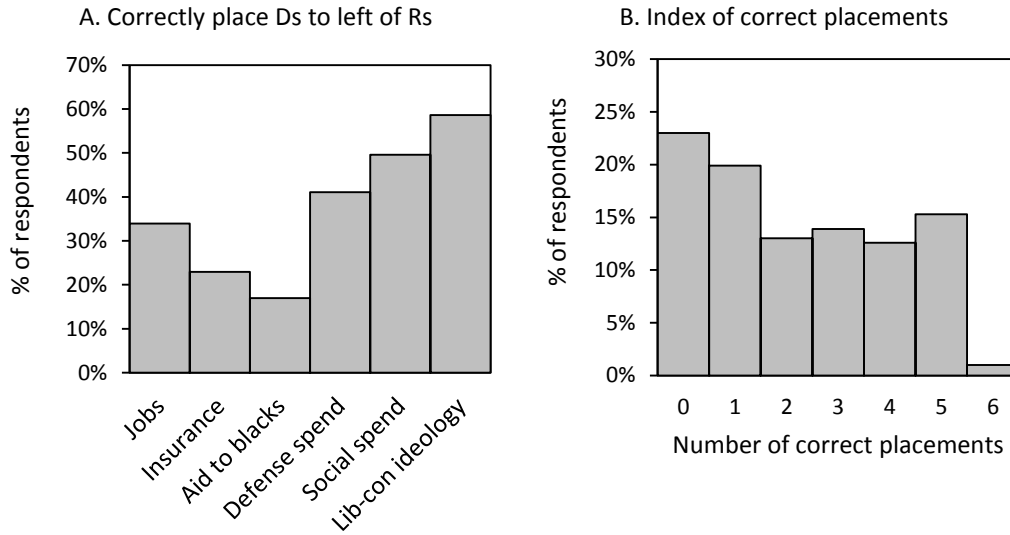
As a quantity of interest, political knowledge is a somewhat convoluted concept in political science (Mondak, 1999, 2001). Yet, while prior work has argued for a tight connection between party-policy knowledge and sorting (Levendusky, 2009), there is reason to think that this type of political acumen is unevenly related to identity and issue sorting. Converse’s (1964) classic finding that citizens use labels and groups to orient themselves within political space, as opposed to policy information, still rings true in other applications that test how different forms of information shape public

opinion (Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus, 2013; Nicholson, 2012). Nevertheless, what individuals know—or, at least, *think* they know—about the parties is a key piece of working knowledge reflective of familiarity with the structure of the wider party system. While these placements are shown to be predictive of sorting in *The Partisan Sort* (Levendusky, 2009), there are good reasons to suspect that such placements may be unevenly related to identity and issue sorting.

### **3.2.1 Operationalizing a metric of political knowledge**

To construct a working metric of political knowledge, I utilize the aforementioned party-policy placement items that ask individuals to assess where a given party sits on a response continuum that juxtaposes two countervailing liberal-conservative viewpoints / categories. The items examined here include jobs, insurance, affirmative action, defense spending, and social spending policies and are coded such that liberal policy solutions take lower and conservative solutions higher values. Respondents are asked to place both the Democratic and Republican Parties on these policy scales. With policy placements for each party in hand, we can then compare whether or not an individual reliably places the Democratic Party to the left of the Republican Party on these items—thus making a “correct” assessment. Individuals receive a value of “1” if they place the Democratic Party to the left of the Republican Party on a given item and “0” otherwise. In addition to these five items, I also examine whether individuals correctly place Democrats to the left of Republicans on the traditional seven-category liberal-conservative scale. Finally, I aggregate these placements in an *index of correct placements* that varies from 0, “no correct placements,” to 6, “correctly places parties on all items.”

Figure 8. Percentage of respondents who correctly place Democrats to “left” of Republicans



Source: 1984-2012 ANES Time-Series

Notes: Estimates represent the average percentage of respondents who correctly place Democratic Party to “left” of Republican Party on five policy items and symbolic, liberal-conservative ideology.

Figure 8 presents both the proportion of people who correctly place the parties on the individual items (Panel A) and a summary index that aggregates the number of correct placements that individuals make (Panel B). The proportion of correct placements varies markedly across items. As Panel A indicates, individuals are far more likely to correctly place the parties within symbolic liberal-conservative space than they are, for example, able to correctly place the parties on health care policy. Taken as a whole, Panel B indicates that individuals are quite poor at correctly recognizing differences between the parties on multiple items. An overwhelming majority of respondents are unable to place the parties on as many as two items and fewer than one percent of respondents correctly place the parties on all six placements.

### 3.2.2 Results

The first column in Table 2 analyzes the relationship between political knowledge and partisan sorting (I also control for another facet of knowledge, whether a respondent “knows which party retains the House majority,” although the coefficients for this item and a series of other controls are relegated to an appendix for presentational brevity). As expected, placing the Democratic Party to the left of the Republican Party on many items is associated with greater levels of partisan sorting. Individuals who correctly recognize differences between the political parties are, on balance, more apt to exhibit convergence among their ideological and partisan preferences.

Is such political awareness unevenly related to identity and issue sorting? Models 2 and 3 disaggregate partisan sorting into its constituent parts. Interestingly, the coefficient for the placements index varies by about 30 percent in size across models. Correctly placing Democrats to the left of Republicans on all six items is associated with a much larger change in identity relative issue sorting.<sup>12</sup>

However, this index of party placements obscures differences in how political acumen or knowledge relates to sorting. To use the nomenclature found in Carmines and Stimson’s (1989) early work, we might classify knowing Democrats are liberals and Republicans, conservative as an “easy” form of knowledge, while understanding party differences on, say, defense spending is “hard.” To tease apart how different forms of political acumen shape identity and issue sorting, I decompose the knowledge index

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<sup>12</sup> The careful reader may ask “But is the difference in the magnitude of these coefficients across the issue and identity sorting models statistically significant?” Briefly, yes. One option for testing whether the coefficient estimates for these variables are equivalent (i.e. the null hypothesis) or different (i.e. alternative hypothesis) is to analyze these models using Seemingly Unrelated Regression (SUR), which differs from other forms of simultaneous equation models in that SUR strictly models exogenous regressors (Zellner, 1963). Because SUR treats the error terms of each equation as if they are correlated, this modeling approach is suitable for testing differences between these coefficients across forms of sorting, given that the latter terms likely have correlated error terms. In the interests of brevity, full modeling results of these analyses are not reported here, but we are able to reject the null hypothesis that the coefficients reported in the two models are equal ( $\chi^2 = 90.99$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ).

into its constituent placements. In the analysis of issue sorting in Model 4, placing Democrats to the left of Republicans on the various policy placements increases sorting by an average of two points, such that, taken together, an individual that correctly places the parties on each pairing would be about 10 points more sorted than someone who failed to correctly link the parties to these policies at all. Notably, however, while placement of the parties on liberal-conservative ideology produces a modest, positive coefficient, the magnitude of this effect pales in comparison to the associated coefficient observed in Model 5. This difference helps illuminate not only differences *between* forms of sorting, but informational differences *among* these placements (ignored in earlier work).

This point is drawn into sharper relief when we examine the effects of party-policy knowledge on identity sorting in Model 5. While we observe that policy placements are occasionally related to identity sorting, the magnitude of the effect of correctly placing Democrats as liberal and Republicans as conservative on sorting is substantial—more than three times as large as the associated effect on issue sorting. Clearly, the close relationship between these placements and the symbolic components of identity-based sorting are driving the magnitude of the effect of liberal-conservative placements on partisan sorting. Simply put, not only are policy and identity sorting different, but their informational correlates vary tremendously.

Table 2. The effect of recognizing party differences on sorting (item-by-item)

	Partisan sorting				
	(issue + identity)	Issue sorting	Identity sorting	Issue sorting	Identity sorting
<i>Correctly place Democrats to left of Republicans on...</i>	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Government jobs	-----	-----	-----	0.03 (0.02)	0.01 (0.01)
Health insurance	-----	-----	-----	0.02* (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Aid to minorities	-----	-----	-----	0.02* (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)
Defense spending	-----	-----	-----	0.02* (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)
Social spending	-----	-----	-----	0.04** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)
Liberal-conservative	-----	-----	-----	0.05** (0.01)	0.14** (0.02)
Index of placements	0.18** (0.03)	0.17** (0.03)	0.24** (0.04)	-----	-----
Constant	-2.61 (2.37)	-2.53 (2.24)	-3.13 (3.18)	-2.39 (2.16)	-3.19 (2.14)
R2	0.10	0.09	0.10	0.09	0.13
N	9,572	9,572	9,572	9,572	9,572

Source: 1984-2012 ANES Time-Series

Notes: Control variables excluded from analysis for brevity. Standard errors in parentheses have been clustered by year; \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01

## 4 Discussion and conclusion

Interest in the divisions that separate Americans has spilled from academic to lay observers. *The New York Times* argues that “Polarization is dividing American society, not just politics” (Cohn, 2014). *The Washington Post* writes that “Urban and rural America are becoming increasingly polarized.”<sup>13</sup> Apparently, neither gastronomical

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/2016-election/urban-rural-vote-swing/>

fare, “Americans just as polarized on food as they are on politics” (Erbentraut, 2016) nor sports “Our polarized nation interprets one 84 Lumber Super Bowl ad two completely different ways” (Burns, 2017), have remained unsullied.

Nuanced these popular descriptions are not. What, then, are we to make of divisions, much less the ordering of mass opinion? Taking stock of the evidence assembled here, if matching among political preferences is the primary quantity of interest, then the mass public appears to possess relatively “coherent” preferences. It is, in fact, sorted. Yet this sorting is appreciably shallow once we take into account the full breadth of the survey response.

If terminological precision is as important as careful empirical analysis, then how scholars talk about these phenomena requires heeding special attention *to their measurement*. Indeed, as Jacoby (1999) argues, measurement and theory-building go hand-in-hand. As such, it would be accurate to say that the mass public is, on balance, sorted regarding its ideological preferences. Yet this statement deserves qualification. Not only is the extent of sorting appreciably modest, but sorting on issues and identity are separable facets of preference orientations—a finding that missed in extant work. In fact, although the correlation between forms of sorting rises and falls over time, the general trend of the relationship between these items is positive in the aggregate. In general, Americans exhibit greater sorting on both identities and attitudes today relative the early 1980s. Still, given the enormous heterogeneity among the average individual’s policy preferences, the evidence for within-subject changes in individual-level issue sorting over time is meager, at best. Instead, individuals are much more likely to constrain their symbolic political identities than they are to become sophisticated, policy-matching-partisans.

What explains this disconnect? The temporal effects at play could have something to do with both micro- and macro-level processes. Given what we know about how individuals answer surveys, that, to some degree, attitudes appear to be the manifestation of “top-of-the-head” considerations (Zaller and Feldman, 1992), it is unlikely that, barring some sort of extreme event that placed a number of issues at the forefront of survey-takers minds, we should observe increased issue sorting between a



compressed period of time. However, given the symbolic and salient nature of political labels—and the proportion of people who rely on such labels to navigate political space (Converse, 1964)—it makes more sense that individuals might become more efficient at connecting their political identities. In the aggregate, the general increase in the correlation between these forms of sorting is likely a byproduct of polarization, combined with how ideological labels have absorbed varying issue content.

Finally, these analyses offer some insight into the core informational requirements of sorting. Understanding where the parties fit within left-right ideological space contributes to greater identity relative issue sorting; in contrast, knowing something about the relationship between parties and their policy platforms is related to greater issue relative identity sorting. This is a significant disconnect missed in previous research and underscores why combining liberal-conservative identity and issue attitudes together is ill-advised. As scholars continue to probe the nature of opinion within the mass public, taking stock of how and why sorting differs from polarization is an important step in understanding how partisanship and ideology cohere for the average citizen.

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## Supplemental materials

Figure A1. Seemingly Unrelated Regression (SUR) estimates

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	Issue sorting		Identity Sorting	
	b	s.e.	b	s.e.
Policy placements				
index	0.199	(0.007)	0.275	(0.010)
White	-0.014	(0.006)	0.020	(0.008)
Black	0.045	(0.008)	-0.019	(0.011)
Income	-0.012	(0.007)	0.008	(0.009)
Male	-0.015	(0.004)	-0.006	(0.005)
Age	0.000	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)
Old South	-0.006	(0.004)	-0.010	(0.006)
Political interest	0.000	(0.005)	0.000	(0.007)
Knows House majority	0.010	(0.004)	0.031	(0.005)
Protestant Id	0.023	(0.004)	0.035	(0.005)
Year counter	0.001	(0.000)	0.001	(0.000)
Constant	-1.939	(0.422)	-2.352	(0.550)
R2	0.096		0.113	
N	9474		9474	

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Source: 1984-2012 ANES Time-Series

Notes: Standard errors in parenthesis.

Table A2. Full model output for Table 2 in main body of text

	Partisan sorting (issue + identity)	Issue sorting	Identity sorting	Issue sorting	Identity sorting
Placements index	0.18** (0.03)	0.17** (0.03)	0.24** (0.04)	-----	-----
Jobs	-----	-----	-----	0.03 (0.02)	0.01 (0.01)
Insurance	-----	-----	-----	0.02* (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Aid to minorities	-----	-----	-----	0.02* (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)
Defense spending	-----	-----	-----	0.02* (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)
Social spending	-----	-----	-----	0.04** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)
Liberal- conservative	-----	-----	-----	0.05** (0.01)	0.14** (0.02)
White	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)
Black	0.03* (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	-0.03** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)
Income	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Male	-0.01* (0.00)	-0.02* (0.00)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01** (0.00)	-0.01 (0.01)
Age	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Old South	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01* (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01* (0.01)
Political interest	0.01 (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)	0.01 (0.06)	0.01 (0.05)	0.00 (0.06)
Knows House Majority	0.02* (0.01)	0.01* (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	0.01* (0.00)	0.03** (0.01)
Protestant Id	0.02** (0.00)	0.02** (0.00)	0.03** (0.00)	0.02** (0.00)	0.02** (0.00)



Table A2. Full model output for Table 2 in main body of text *continued...*

	Partisan sorting (issue + identity)	Issue sorting	Identity sorting	Issue sorting	Identity sorting
Evangelical Id	0.04** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	0.05** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	0.06** (0.01)
Year counter	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Constant	-2.61 (2.37)	-2.53 (2.24)	-3.13 (3.18)	-2.39 (2.16)	-3.19 (2.14)
R2	0.10	0.09	0.10	0.09	0.13
N	9,572	9,572	9,572	9,572	9,572

Source: 1984-2012 ANES Time-Series

Notes: \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; robust standard errors in parentheses.