A Broader Approach to Identity Politics: 
Socio-Partisan Sorting and the Deepening Partisan Divide

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Abstract

The classic definition of identity politics implies that individuals participate in politics on behalf of their specific social groups. Racial, religious, gender, and sexual orientation are all forms of identity that fall under the general rubric of identity politics, which conveys that individual, non-political group identities can motivate group members’ political behavior. But what happens when these social group identities converge with partisan ones? Research from social identity theory and the cross-pressures literatures hint that as these identities converge, their combined strength should have greater impact on out-group tolerance, political evaluations, and behavior. This paper examines the effect this “socio-partisan sorting” from a social identity perspective. We expect that as the parties have grown increasingly racially and religiously distinct, partisans have received more powerful cues about the "correct" ideological identity. Using ANES Time-Series surveys and a purpose-driven national study conducted by YouGov Polimetrix, we find that as racial and religious identities converge with partisan identities, partisans not only grow better ideologically sorted, but become more biased against their partisan opponents. This increased ideological consistency corresponds to an increase in partisan bias and intolerance across the electorate, particularly over time.

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I Introduction

In recent years, Americans’ political and social identities have moved into greater alignment, a pattern colloquially known as “sorting.” When political scientists refer to such sorting, they are usually referring to a specific form of this phenomenon that signifies an increasing alignment between partisan and ideological preferences (Levenkusky 2009) and identities (Mason, 2015; Davis and Dunaway, forthcoming). However, partisan identities have also converged with religious (Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2005; Layman 1997; 2001; Patrikios 2008) and racial (Valentino and Sears 2005; Mangum 2013) identities. This is a distinct, wider form of identity alignment that we term “socio-partisan sorting,” which we believe is distinguishable from the convergence between partisan and ideological identities.

Because social identities fundamentally shape attitudes by folding the value and significance attached to an individual’s group memberships into their self-concept (Tajfel, 1981), socio-partisan sorting—which reflects the degree to which an individual’s partisan and social identities overlap—has the capacity to not only affect the way Americans engage in partisan-ideological sorting, but can shape how they interact with each other as partisans. In short, this broader form of sorting can motivate the affective (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012), social (Mason 2015), and even issue-based polarization that has recently been identified in the American electorate (Abramowitz 2013). Using data drawn from the American National Election Studies Time-Series surveys and a unique, purpose-driven nationally-representative study conducted by Polimetrix, we demonstrate that the effects of socio-partisan sorting go beyond our traditional understanding of identity politics, in which a single social identity (such as race or religion) is capable of motivating political action and knowledge in the distinct realm related to that particular identity (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960; Conover 1984; Miller, Gurin, Gurin, and Malanchuck 1981; Olsen 1970; Verba and Nie 1972).

In our view, as political parties grow increasingly aligned with religious and racial identities, individual partisans grow increasingly ideologically sorted on a both a social and an issue-based level (though, importantly, the social effects are not entirely dependent on issue opinions). Our analyses indicate that this socio-partisan sorting is

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1 Although other forms of “sorting” exist. Bishop (2008) and Nall (2014) consider the degree to which individuals have geographically sorted themselves by political affiliation, while Huber and Malhotra (2013) examine the assortive mating patterns of partisans.
capable of 1) polarizing the nation across a range of issue positions, not simply the issues relevant to one or two particular identities, and 2) driving forms of social polarization that surpasses mere issue disagreements. In short, as religious and racial identities become aligned with partisan ones, Americans not only disagree more on a range of substantive issues, but also dislike each other on a more primal level. We find that both ideological and social polarization increase as social identities are filtered into their respective partisan camps and that the resulting affective polarization indicates that bitter divisions within the mass public extend beyond the individual issue disagreements that single group identities might motivate.

II Traditional Identity Politics

Social identities are characterized as an identification with a particular group. According to Klandermans (2014, pg. 5), this sense of group identification is “an awareness of similarity, ingroup identity, and shared fate with others who belong to the same category…It has pervasive effects on what people feel, think, and do” (see also: Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1981). Because group identification is driven by an innate desire to positively distinguish one’s ingroup, the most prominent effect generated by this process is ingroup bias, in which individuals reliably privilege and judge the members of their own group as superior, without regard to the constraints of reality.2

A traditional view of identity politics takes individual social identities such as race or religion and examines how each identity is capable of driving political behavior in relation to that specific group. As Conover (1984, pg. 761, emphasis ours) explains, “relatively few Americans think ‘ideologically’ in the sense that they order their political beliefs according to certain basic ideological principles. Thus, as Kinder (1982) has pointed out, the key question is no longer ‘do people think ideologically?’ but rather simply, ‘how do people think about politics?’ In addressing this question one approach is to return to ‘basics,’ to go back to those ideas that originally fueled research on political behavior. And, one of the more appealing of those is the notion that people's ties to various groups help to structure their political thinking.”

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2 It is important to note, however, that simple membership in a social group does not necessarily require or produce such bias. Rather it is vital to distinguish the degree to which an individual identifies with that group in order to fully understand the relevance of that social identity on behaviors, especially political action.
Thinking about individuals’ ties to their distinct social groups has been a useful way to help political scientists understand how Americans organize their political thinking. Klandermans (2014, pg. 2), for example, explains that “collective identity becomes politically relevant when people who share a specific identity take part in political action on behalf of that collective.” In other words, social identities translate into political ones when group norms are associated with explicit, political demands to the extent that behavior within the political realm is governed by that identity (Huddy, 2013). At times, even as a replacement for ideological sophistication, a salient racial or religious identity can motivate individuals to grow awareness around and take political action on behalf of racial or religious issues, respectively (e.g. Carmines and Stimson, 1989). Yet these are inherently limited entries into politics insofar as the effect of an individual’s particular identity on political behavior is essentially viewed in isolation from the other identities that comprise their worldview.

New work by Huddy, Mason, and Aaroe (2015) provides convincing evidence that an individual’s partisan identity can also be treated as a social one, which is to say that this identity is not entirely dependent upon logical and rational policy-based decisions. Bolstering this claim, Theodoridis (2013) finds evidence that partisan identity exists at a subconscious level, while Iyengar and Westwood (2014) demonstrate that partisan affect is so deeply ingrained in individuals’ minds that these identities exert powerful influence on a variety of non-political judgments and behaviors. In other words, partisan identities, like their racial and religious counterparts, are social and visceral, as well as practical and logical (see also, Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002; Greene 1999; 2002; Mason 2013).

The traditional view of these partisan, religious, and racial identities, however, is limited by its singular focus on each social group individually. Instead of a view of identity politics in which social identities are essentially compartmentalized, we suggest that the alignment of social identities around partisan identities creates a generalized politicization of Americans’ otherwise non-political identities. Rather than motivating increased interest in and knowledge about a small collection of issues, socio-partisan sorting drives people toward a broader “ideological identification” that isn’t limited to any one issue, but inspires a greater ideological consistency and affective polarization
among the most socially-sorted partisans.

III Cross-Pressured or Aligned?

Our work examines what happens when a partisan social identity is joined by other social identities that overlap with the goals or motivations of the underlying political self-concept. Is the combined effect of this identity convergence on political thought and behavior larger than the effect of any single identity alone? There are good reasons to expect that a conglomeration of social identities that converge or are discordant to partisan identities should have particularly profound effects on the American electorate. Klandermans (2014, pg. 2) notes, for example, that individuals possess multiple identities, and that “these many identities do not necessarily work in the same direction.” What happens when these identities are discordant? Some early work in political science has explored the possibility that multiple identities may offset the effects of preferences related to one identity over another. Dubbed, “cross-pressures,” Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1944) and Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes (1960) introduced the idea that at any given moment, voters are subject to the countervailing pressures of a number of salient social identities. Because conflict among objectives related to these identities reduces the strength of goal-directed motivation, behavioral and attitudinal ambiguities are likely to occur (Miller and Campbell, 1957). For example, partisans who identify with groups associated with the opposing party are less likely to vote (Campbell et. al, 1960), while other research suggests that these persons are less strongly partisan (Powell, 1976), that these “cross-cutting cleavages” mitigate social conflict (Lipset, 1960; Nordlinger, 1972), and destabilize judgments and decision-making (Lavine, Johnston, and Steenbergen, 2012). This is because, as Miller (1983, pg. 735) explains,

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

3 Furthermore, there are good reasons to expect that these effects will be most noticeable in the affective and social realm of polarization, even beyond their effects in the rational, policy-based realm of polarization, sometimes called ideological polarization (Abramowitz 2013).
preferences with respect to one or more issues but almost certainly agree on many issues as well.

This implies that as long as the social divisions in society are cross-cutting, partisans of opposing parties should still be able to coexist in relative peace. However, once these cleavages begin to align along a single dimension, partisan conflict is expected to increase substantially.\(^4\)

Research in social psychology further underscores these findings: the effect of overlapping identities on judgment and behavior goes beyond the effect of a single social identity alone.\(^5\) When group identities are cross-cutting, for example, individuals are generally found to be more tolerant, less-biased, and to feel more positive emotions toward outgroups (Brewer, 1999; Roccas and Brewer, 2002; Brewer and Pierce, 2005). Conversely, those persons whose identities are aligned—that is, when a large portion of the members of one group are (or are believed to be) also members of the other group—are more likely to be intolerant, biased, and feel negatively toward outgroups. This is because cross-cutting identities undermine the cognitive and motivational bases of ingroup biases by reducing the perceived differences between the groups, allowing an individual to feel like (s)he belongs to and is defined by a broader range of groups (Roccas and Brewer 2002). These are psychological effects of sorting that deal with perception of innate differences, rather than the logical considerations of issues.

Once we conceptualize political identities as social identities that have the capacity to align with or diverge from other identities, it is possible to predict that a member of a party that is unaligned with their religion or race would feel less bias toward the opposing party than a member of the same party whose religion, race and/or political

\(^4\) This dovetails with more recent work by Carsey and Layman (2002) and Carsey et. al, (2011), which makes the distinction between historical eras of “conflict replacement” and “conflict extension.” In the former era, particular, single issues that characterized political disagreement were replaced by new issues once old ones had run their course (e.g. conflict over slavery was replaced by currency issues, which was, in turn replaced by disagreement over welfare reform). However, beginning in the 1960s, Carsey and Layman (2002) argue that this pattern of conflict was replaced as multiple areas of issue conflict became layered onto a single dimension (see also: Sundquist, 1983 and Brewer, 2005). Certainly this has happened at the elite level (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal, 2006), and this has natural consequences for our narrative as outlined above.

\(^5\) One significant limitation of the cross-pressures approach in political science is that these studies, unlike those found in social psychology, do not identify or measure partisanship as a social identity. In fact, Miller (1983) explicitly confuses social groups and issue positions, which are not necessarily the same things (Mason 2015; Huddy et al 2015).
movement identity is aligned with their party. Thus, once partisans are sorted within these related dimensions, it can be expected that they will experience higher levels of ingroup bias, possibly even greater than what their issue disagreements can explain (Mason, 2015).

IV Theoretical expectations
This research provokes a number of related questions. First, how does the convergence of these identities shape ideological preferences? Given asymmetries in the ideological awareness and acumen between Republicans and Democrats, how might this sorting vary among partisans, particularly over time? Second, to what degree does this socio-partisan sorting shape affective polarization? If overlapping identities accentuate sensitivity to out-groups, then does the convergence of multiple social and political identities increase the degree to which individuals will privilege in-group and derogate out-group members?

We begin with the premise that ideological identity, like partisan identity, can be conceptualized as a group identity that is not necessarily the byproduct of an equivalent set of issue positions. Malka and Lelkes (2010), Devine (2014), and Lelkes and Sniderman (forthcoming) have looked at the differences between ideological identity and a person’s set of issue positions, and have found that the identity-ideology relationship is by no means static. It is governed by social influence and the information environment, which not only conveys that the strength of the relationship between issue preferences and ideology can change from day to day, but that these concepts can be understood as separate phenomena. In fact, Ellis and Stimson (2012) have argued that Americans’ “operational” ideology, or the bundle of their actual issue positions, is a divergent concept from their “symbolic” ideology, or how they identify themselves. This implies that ideological identity-driven behavior may move differently than the consistency or extremity of held issue positions. We believe that it is possible that this divide between operational and symbolic ideology is at least partially driven by an increasing level of socio-partisan sorting, which allows partisans to better understand the ideological “team” to which the should belong, even as the underlying distribution of their attitudes remain minimally changed. In other words, while partisans may be well-sorted between their partisan and ideological identities, the operational (attitudinal) underpinnings of these identities may not follow suit. Our first point of inquiry is the determinants of this
identity-based partisan-ideological alignment. We argue that non-ideological socio-partisan sorting can facilitate a greater level of partisan-ideological identity sorting, with all the behavioral and affective consequences previously demonstrated. As Mason (2015) showed, partisan-ideological identity sorting is not equivalent to policy-centric ideological polarization in which citizens only disagree on issue outcomes. It is possible that having a religious and/or racial identity that is coherent with a partisan identity is capable of generating a new heuristic to identify which ideological identity is appropriate for a partisan. In other words, it teaches partisans whether they should think of themselves as liberals or conservatives, regardless of their actual issue positions.

We suggest that this partisan-ideological identity-based sorting can be significantly affected by socio-partisan sorting – and that this effect is robust to any concurrent polarization of actual issue positions. We further expect that socio-partisan sorting is better able to increase issue-based polarization than each of the social identities (religious or racial) can do on its own. This is an outgrowth of Layman and Carsey’s (2002) conflict extension theory. As social identities line up behind partisanship, the partisan-ideological divide grows larger than it would due to the politicization of any one social identity. Pursuant to this, we expect that each individual social identity will generate less extreme issue-based opinion changes than will the socio-partisan sorting that draws all of these identities into the same camp. For example, a religious identity will affect abortion attitudes less powerfully than will a well-sorted set of partisan, religious, and racial identities.

Relatedly, Ellis and Stimson (2012, pg. 97) point out that “ideological mismatchers, those who combine liberal preferences with conservative identification, are considerably more pervasive than ideological conservatives of the classically understood sort.” It is possible that this phenomenon is occurring precisely because symbolic conservatives are well-socially-sorted, making the ideological label more potent than the actual issue positions. As Malka and Sniderman (forthcoming, pg. 6) write, there is an apparent ideological asymmetry between the parties, “where Republicans, to a striking degree, are more ideologically aware and oriented than Democrats.” Ellis and Stimson’s (2012) work, for example, finds that only around ten percent of symbolic liberals are not also operational liberals, compared to a “substantial majority” of symbolic conservatives who are not operational conservatives.
If this asymmetry is linked to socio-partisan sorting, we should expect to find that Republicans, the party of conservatives, should be more highly socially sorted than Democrats, the party of liberals, particularly over time. Yet, comparatively speaking, this asymmetry may have less purchase on the degree to which individuals are sorted across their policy preferences. In fact, given the public’s attitudinal preference for “liberal” responses to questions of social welfare, this asymmetrical sorting may be less profound among an individual’s bundle of policy preferences. However, given the powerful linkage between cultural-moral issues and partisanship, socio-partisan sorting among Republicans may still increase issue consistency relative concomitant sorting among Democrats.

Finally, we turn to considering the downstream social consequences of this sorting of identities. Commonly referred to as “affective polarization,” this phenomena is indicative of the degree to which people dislike an opposing group such that they will impute negative qualities to members of an out-group (Iyengar et al., 2012). Previous research by Mason (2015) has examined the effect of partisan and ideological identity alignment on this affective or “social” polarization, a phenomenon characterized by bias, activism, and anger toward individuals identifying with an opposing party.

Here, we are primarily interested in two metrics of this phenomenon. First, feeling thermometers are commonly used to assess individuals’ feelings of social distance relative to an object. Taking the absolute difference between feelings toward mutually-exclusive groups helps to assess the degree to which a person prioritizes or privileges one group over another. Mason (2015) finds evidence that the relationship between this partisan bias, or the difference between rating of a partisan’s in- and out-group, and partisan-ideological sorting is strong. Drawing on a substantial body of work in social psychology (c.f. Tajfel 1981) socio-partisan sorting should accentuate or magnify the differences that an individual perceives between the in- and out-group, which, in turn, should increase levels of social polarization (i.e. partisan bias). Second, in a working paper, Huber and Malhotra (20xx) argue that partisan homophily—or assortive mating tendencies grounded in political preferences—is profound. Our expectation is that the convergence of multiple social identities should not only substantially reduce an individual’s empathy for out-group persons, but should fundamentally shape the degree to which they are willing to marry a person belonging to an opposing political party.
These expectations lead to a number of formal hypotheses:

**H1**: Socio-partisan sorting (the alignment of racial, religious, and partisan identities) increases partisan-ideological sorting more powerfully than either racial or religious identities alone.

**H2**: Socio-partisan sorting increases partisan-ideological sorting even when issue positions are held constant.

**H3**: Socio-partisan sorting affects individual issue opinions more strongly than an issue-related identity alone.

**H4**: Socio-partisan sorting increases affective polarization, even when issue disagreements are held constant.

**H5**: Socio-partisan sorting has increased more quickly among Republicans than among Democrats.

## Data and Methods

To test these hypotheses, we utilize data from both the American National Election Studies (ANES) and Polimetrix. This two-pronged approach affords us the opportunity to test both static and temporal features of socio-partisan sorting.

**Pometrix Data.** In data collected November 2011, 1,100 respondents answered a web-based survey via Polimetrix. Polimetrix maintains a panel of respondents, which it recruits through their polling website in return for incentives. Since recruitment into the panel is voluntary, the sample may be unrepresentative of the national population. However, sample matching was employed to draw a close to nationally representative sub-sample. The matching results in a sample that has the most similar characteristics to the national population as is possible. This sample was balanced between Democrats and Republicans.

**Dependent variables.** We begin by defining our operationalization of socio-partisan sorting. Here, Black, Evangelical and Secular social identities are measured in relation to Democratic and Republican identities. All of these identities are measured using the four-item scale developed by Huddy et al (2015) that has been demonstrated to...
Socio-partisan sorting

assess the social identity element of partisanship. After assessing whether each individual is a member of each group, this four-item scale is applied to each of the relevant identities listed here (the routing items and full identity batteries can be found in Appendix A). This measure is coded to range from 0 to 1.

The socio-partisan sorting scale is designed to assess (1) the objective alignment between a respondent’s ingroup identities, (2) accounting for the subjective strength of those identities. This is done because the alignment between identities does not matter if a person does not identify with one or both groups. The objective alignment of these various political identities is assessed by linking each non-party identity to one of the two parties according to linkages found in prior research, and also verified by examining the mean level of each identity for each party separately in the current dataset. Aligned identities are found to be, for the Democratic party- secular and Black identities, and for the Republican party- evangelical identities. The imbalance between the number of identities for each party is managed by constraining sorting scores to have the same range for both parties.

The identity scales are combined such that, for each party, aligned identities are coded with positive values while unaligned identities are coded negatively. The mean of the identity scale scores is then taken for each party, with aligned identities increasing the total value and unaligned identities decreasing the final score. The party-specific scores are gathered into one measure, recoded to range from 0 to 1, with 0 representing

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7 Items include: (1) How important is being a [identity] to you? (2) How well does the term [identity] describe you? (3) When talking about [identity]s how often do you use “we” instead of “they”? (4) To what extent do you think of yourself as being a [identity]?

8 The partisan identity items create a reliable scale: Republicans (α=.88), Democrats (α=.89). All other identities also generated reliable scales: Evangelical (α=.88), Secular(α=.80), and Black (α=.78).

9 There are many other ways to construct a measure of identity alignment, including Brewer’s (2000), in which it is measured subjectively. For the purposes of this study, we focus intentionally on identities that are objectively aligned, and then measure the strength of identification with each of the aligned identities. This measure is diminished if identities are cross-cutting, weak, or both. We welcome alternative measures of identity alignment in future research, but believe that the current measures are sufficient to test the political outcomes of this new focus on alignment, rather than single identities alone.
consistently weak or totally unaligned identities and 1 representing the strongest, most consistently aligned identities.\textsuperscript{10}

Second, we measure partisan-ideological sorting using a method similar to the one listed above for socio-partisan sorting. However, in this case, the only identities involved are liberal, conservative, Democratic, and Republican. Liberal and conservative identities are measured using the same social identity four-item scale. For Democrats, a liberal identity is coded positively while a conservative identity is coded negatively, and the mean of the party and ideological identity scores is taken. For Republicans, a conservative identity is coded positively while a liberal identity is coded negatively, and the mean of the party and ideological scores is taken. The Democratic and Republican scores are collected into one measure.

Finally, in order to examine the effect of the social aspects of ideology, it is necessary to control for the effects of real issue positions. This project includes a scale of “issue constraint,” which accounts for the extremity, constraint, and salience of five issues: immigration, Obamacare, abortion, same-sex marriage, and the relative importance of reducing the deficit or unemployment (exact wording in Appendix A). These items form a reliable scale ($\alpha=.76$). Each issue position is weighted by an issue importance item, created from follow-up items asking “How important is this issue to you?” The full weighted index is then folded in half and coded to range from 0 (weakest, least important, and/or consistent issue positions) to 1 (strongest, most important and/or consistent issue positions on both ends of the spectrum).\textsuperscript{11}

Control Variables Controls are included for sex, income, age, political sophistication (an index of 5 political identification items, see Appendix A for exact wording), and Hispanic race.

American National Election Studies (ANES) Time-Series: 1948-2012. Although the ANES data does not provide the rich social identity-based measures available in the ANES.

\textsuperscript{10} A more complete explanation of the measure appears in Appendix B.

\textsuperscript{11} Recent work by Brookman (forthcoming) suggested that by combining the issues into a scale before folding the scale, extreme issue positions in different directions are mistakenly represented as “moderate.” This is true, and all of the models here have been run using an alternate issue scale that does not account for constraint. The results are not markedly different from those presented here. However, the constraint of the issues is expected to matter in this case, where sorting is generating increasingly distinct partisan teams.
Polimetrix data, it does provide the essential element of temporal comparison. We have therefore replicated the files from the Polimetrix data using ANES data to examine the effects of the temporal progression of the alignment of these social identities on ideological sorting as well as partisan bias.

**Dependent variables.** We consider three dependent variables in the forthcoming analyses. First, *issue consistency* accounts for the basic ideological congruence of an individual’s attitudes across a number of policy items. These include questions about the propriety of abortion, the scope of government expenditures, the provision of government-sponsored healthcare, government aid to minorities, and defense spending. This variable is operationalized by combining each of the six policy items, which have all been coded such that low values represent liberal positions, medium values moderate positions, and high values conservative positions. This index of all six policy items is then folded in half and rescaled from 0 to 1, creating a scale that ranges from moderate, neutral positions (low values), to heterogeneous policy preferences (medium values), to consistent and extreme policy attitudes (high values).

Our second dependent variable is *partisan-ideological sorting*. The operationalization of this item roughly adheres to the scheme outlined above, but utilizes the 7-point ideological and political self-identification scales rather than the SIT variables. As Mason (2015) outlines in her work, this variable is operationalized by first subtracting an individual’s partisan from ideological self-placement scores, reverse coding the resulting values so that high values represent a high degree and low values a lower degree of overlap, and then multiplying these scores by the folded strength of both ideological and partisan self-placement. After rescaling the output from 0 to 1, low values on this index represent weak, conflicted partisan and ideological identities, while high values represent strong and congruent ones.

Third, we consider how socio-partisan sorting affects the prevalence of *partisan bias*, which represents a unique measure of social distance or “social polarization” that partisans feel toward their political rivals. This variable is operationalized by taking the absolute value of the difference between a respondent’s thermometer rankings of “Republicans” and “Democrats,” which each vary between 0 (unfavorable ratings) and 100 (favorable ratings). Rescaled from 0 to 1, this variable is interpreted as the relative
Socio-partisan sorting

antipathy that an individual has toward one of the parties, where low values convey little
difference between party ratings and high values large differences or bias.

*Socio-partisan sorting.* In order to operationalize a valid measure of socio-
partisan sorting, we require information about both the character and strength of an
individual’s social and political identities. However, the creation of a measure that
accounts for congruence between these identities is difficult using data that was not
explicitly generated with such a task in mind.12 Nevertheless, the ANES Time-Series
surveys contain a number of questions that are suitable for the purpose of creating a
proximate measure of socio-partisan that is comparable to the variable outlined in the
foregoing section. We attempt to match the constituent components of that variable to
this one.

First, we measure an individual’s *racial identity* by utilizing a simple feeling
thermometer of an individual’s “in-group” for white and black respondents. Ranging
from 0 to 100, low values represent relatively cool feelings toward an individual’s own
racial group, while high values convey warm or positive sentiments. Second, *religious
identity* is broken down into two categories: 1) evangelical identity is operationalized by
multiplying whether or not a respondent is a “born-again” Christian by the degree to
which they believe religion is important (giving this measure a rough element of
strength); and 2) Secular identity comprises those persons who selected “atheist” or
“agnostic” on the ANES major religion scale; this item is then multiplied by a reverse-
coded “religion is important” item so that individuals scoring higher values on secular
identity are those who have strong areligious identity. Finally, an individual’s *partisan
identity* is operationalized using the traditional seven-point party identification variable.
This variable ranges from 0, Strong Democrat, to 1, Strong Republican. *Partisan strength*
is a folded measure of this variable.

12 Although recent research suggests that traditional self-assessment measures of identity (e.g.
partisanship) underperform multifaceted approaches (Mason, Huddy, and Aaroe 2011), the
availability of more finely-tuned measures that span any appreciable duration of time is virtually
nonexistent. This is problematic because the distribution of identity convergence—i.e. socio-
sorting—within the mass public has undergone modest changes over time. Individuals sampled in
the most recent, 2012 iteration of the ANES Time-Series survey, for example, are better sorted
than their counterparts who were surveyed in 1980. We believe that gaining leverage on the
dynamics of socio-partisan is worth the empirical tradeoff of employing these measures.
To create our socio-partisan sorting variable, we first conceptualize the idealized groupings of these items according to an ideologically political “left / right” scheme, where “Democrats, blacks, and secular” and “Republicans, evangelical, and white” identifiers match to each other. The equation underlying this variable can be specified as:

(1) Socio-partisan sorting = mean(Religious ID + Racial ID + Partisan ID)

However, because both the religious and racial identification items comprise mutually-exclusive “left” and “right” categories (an individual cannot be both secular and evangelical), we need a way to empirically penalize individuals who do not conform to the idealized schemes listed above. Thus, Equation 1 is re-specified for both Republicans and Democrats, separately, so as to interject potential cross-pressures for identities that do not conform to the scheme listed above.

(2A) Socio-partisan sorting\(_{Republican} = \) mean(Evangelical ID – Secular ID + White ID – Black ID + Folded PID)

(2B) Socio-partisan sorting\(_{Democrat} = \) mean(Secular ID – Evangelical ID + Black ID – White ID + Folded PID)

Controls. Finally, we control for a number of additional covariates. Political knowledge is operationalized as an individual’s ability to correctly identify (coded 1) which political party had a majority of members in the House of Representatives at the time of the survey.\(^{13}\) Election interest is a three category variable of the degree to which a respondent pays attention to political events and news during election season. This variable ranges from “not at all interested,” coded 0, to “somewhat interested,” coded 1, to “very interested,” coded 2. Income is measured in quintiles (coded 0 to 4), age is a continuous variable ranging from 0 (17 years old) to 1 (98 years old), gender is coded 1 for men and 0 for women, and geographic context, old South, is coded 1 for individuals living within states that comprised the original Confederacy.

VI. Results
Beginning with the Polimetrix data, we examine the effects of socio-partisan sorting on a variety of outcomes. Since we have access to a full range of proper social identity

\(^{13}\) This is an admittedly crude, though not unusual, approximation for political knowledge. Unfortunately the ANES did not begin asking traditional “civics-style” political knowledge questions until the late 1980s.
variables, including Evangelical, Secular, White, and Black identities, we can examine the effect of each identity individually (the traditional concept of identity politics) compared to the effect of all of these identities in terms of their alignment with each party. In Table 1, we examine whether and to what extent each of these identities and socio-partisan sorting is capable of changing the extent to which an individual’s partisan and ideological social identities are “correctly” and strongly aligned.

Predicting Partisan-Ideological Sorting

In model 1 of Table 1, the effect of Evangelical social identity does have a significant effect on partisan-ideological sorting. This is not surprising, as the politicization of Christianity, generally, and particularly Evangelical religious groups, specifically, during the 1980s and 1990s has likely generated a better understanding among the strongest Evangelicals of how their partisan identity should match their ideological identity. However, this effect is relatively modest on its own. Increasing from weakest to strongest Evangelical identity increases partisan-ideological sorting by about 5 percent of the full range of partisan-ideological sorting. In model 2, the strength of a Black social identity actually reduces the match between partisan and ideological identities by the same 5 percentage points. In model 3, a secular social identity has a similar effect as an Evangelical identity, increasing the partisan-ideological alignment by about 6 percentage points.

[Table 1 about here]

However, each of these identities alone cannot compare to a measure of socio-partisan sorting that gauges the alignment between these identities and partisanship. In model 4 of Table 1, moving from the most conflicted partisan and social identities to the

\[14\text{ It may seem inappropriate to use the partisan identity variable in the construction of both the dependent and independent variable. However, these sorting measures are constructed such that they are gauging the distance between partisanship and some other identities. Thus, we argue, the distance between partisanship and racial and religious identities has the power to inform the distance between partisanship and ideological identities. These concepts, in our opinion, are sufficiently different to warrant relational analyses. In fact, we find that socio-partisan sorting has a substantially larger effect on partisan-ideological sorting than the inverse relationship of partisan-ideological sorting to socio-partisan sorting. We take this as a non-trivial finding. Although we cannot establish a causal chain here, it seems to be the case that alignment and convergence of strong social identities has a more profound effect on expressly political identities than those political identities have on social ones. We return to this in greater detail in the discussion.} \]
strongest and most aligned religious, racial, and partisan identities increases the match between partisan and ideological identities by 32 percent of the full range of partisan-ideological sorting, supporting Hypothesis 1.

One might suspect that this alignment of identities is affecting partisan-ideological sorting by helping individuals understand which issues to support, but in fact, a scale of issue constraint, added in model 5, only reduces the effect of socio-partisan sorting by 3 percentage points. While issue constraint is a significant predictor of partisan-ideological sorting, its effect is only one-third the size of the effect of socio-partisan sorting, and its addition to the model does little to diminish the effect of socio-partisan sorting, supporting Hypothesis 2. The alignment between these identities, it seems, is not necessarily helping people to better link their issue positions to their party; rather, it is helping them to better understand whether and how strongly they feel part of a group called liberals or conservatives vis-à-vis their partisan identity.

Figure 1 graphically demonstrates the effect of socio-partisan sorting on partisan-ideological sorting, demonstrating that even at the lowest level of socio-partisan sorting, partisan-ideological sorting is predicted to be at about 0.5, the midpoint of the partisan-ideological sorting scale. However, once religious and racial identities are aligned with partisan identities, the alignment between partisan and ideological identities increases to a sorting score of about 0.75. This is a significant change, and one that leaves little room for further partisan-ideological movement. Socio-partisan sorting, then, provides a way of looking at identity politics by using multiple identities and the relationships between them to better understand how partisans locate their partisan and ideological selves in American politics. At the upper end of the socio-partisan sorting range, American partisans know very well which ideological group is theirs.

*Individual Issues*

Although the degree to which socio-partisan sorting produces partisan-ideological coherence is interesting, most concepts of identity politics relate identities to a specific issue that affects those in that particular group. For example, the traditional view would expect those with strong religious identities to have particularly strong attitudes toward abortion and gay marriage. We expect to find, instead, that the alignment
Socio-partisan sorting

between a relevant identity and other partisan and social identities will be more powerful in predicting group-relevant issue positions than the identity alone. Table 2 examines whether this is true, by separately examining the effects of Evangelical and secular identities, versus socio-partisan sorting (including both of these identities, as well as partisan and racial identities) in predicting attitudes toward abortion and gay marriage. The abortion and gay marriage items are weighted by their rated importance, and scaled to range from 0 (most liberal, most important) to 1 (most conservative, most important). The effects are broken down by party, as we want to see the effect of the identity on directional movement along the issue scale.

[Table 2 about here]

The first two columns of Table 2 compare the relative effects of Evangelical identity and socio-partisan sorting on abortion attitudes among Republicans. In these models, the effect of Evangelical identity is nearly as powerful as the effect of socio-partisan sorting in predicting changes in abortion attitudes. Moving from the weakest to the strongest Evangelical identification increases conservatism in abortion attitudes by about 39 percentage points, while moving from weakest to strongest socio-partisan sorting increases abortion conservatism by about 43 percentage points. The difference between these effects is small, and does not reach significance. However, the fact that the distance between religious, racial, and partisan identities can affect abortion attitudes to the same extent as the simple Evangelical identity suggests that there is some real power in the relationship between identities in driving what we traditionally think of as simply a religious issue.

The second two columns of Table 2 compare the effects of secular identity and socio-partisan sorting on abortion attitudes among Democrats. In this case, both a secular identity and socio-partisan sorting generate increasingly liberal abortion attitudes, but socio-partisan sorting has a significantly stronger effect. Thus, a secular identity does not affect abortion attitudes as strongly as the coherence between religious, racial, and partisan identities. The convergence of multiple identities generates more extreme issue positions in the case of abortion among Democrats.

In the case of gay marriage, similar results are found, but in this case socio-partisan sorting has a stronger effect than individual religious identities among both Democrats and Republicans. In predicting attitudes toward gay marriage, a single
religious identity - the traditional view of identity politics - is less powerful than a measure that considers the relationship between religious, racial, and partisan identities. Moving from least to most sorted increases conservative opinions among Republicans by about 46 percentage points, and increases liberal opinions about gay marriage by about 40 percentage points. The effects of single Evangelical and secular identities are relatively similar to their effects on abortion attitudes. Hypothesis 3 is therefore supported in 3 of 4 tests (among Democrats for the abortion issue and among both Democrats and Republicans for the gay marriage issue).

To put the effects of socio-partisan sorting into visual perspective, Figure 2 presents each issue individually, examining the effects of socio-partisan sorting among Democrats and Republicans separately. Interestingly, at low levels of socio-partisan sorting, Democrats and Republicans hold similar positions on abortion and gay marriage, relatively close to the most moderate position possible on the issue scale. However, as those partisan identities fall into alignment with religious and racial identities, Democrats and Republicans grow significantly distinct in their positions, moving close to the most extreme issue positions at the highest level of socio-partisan sorting. In the case of Republicans, the most highly sorted (which for Republicans means strongly identified with Republican and Evangelical identities, and not at all with secular or Black identities) reach close to the most extremely conservative opinion on gay marriage.

[Figure 2 about here]

Affective Polarization

Considering that socio-partisan sorting has effects on both issue positions and partisan-ideological identity sorting that match or exceed the effects of individual identities alone, it is likely that it has further effects on political behavior, particularly partisan conflict. In Table 3, we examine the effect of socio-partisan sorting on one measure of “affective polarization” – the willingness to marry a member of the opposing party. Hypothesis 4 predicts that this sorting will generate affective polarization, even when issue positions are unchanging. In other words, the simple alignment and strength of partisan, religious, and racial identities should be capable of powerfully driving bias against the opposing party, even when there is no change in the level of issue disagreement with the opposing party.

[Table 3 about here]
Table 3 supports this hypothesis, even when we control for issue positions. This ordered probit model, however, produces opaque coefficients, so results are more clearly presented in Figure 3. This demonstrates predicted probabilities of varying levels of willingness to marry an individual from the opposing party (pure independents are excluded from this model, as they do not have an opposing party). As can be seen from Figure 3, the probability of absolutely refusing to marry a member of the opposing party (the “definitely not” line) is only 10 percent among those with the most cross-cutting partisan, religious, and racial identities. However, when those three identities are highly aligned, a person displays a 40 percent chance of “definitely not” marrying a partisan opponent. It is not simply single identities that determine this partisan social preference, it is the convergence of multiple identities that cause partisans to socially isolate themselves from opponents.

Similarly, among those with cross-cutting identities, 35 percent would “definitely” marry a member of the opposing party, while only about 10 percent of the highly sorted would “definitely” do so. At the lowest end of socio-partisan sorting, partisans can imagine spending great deals of time with political opponents, and even loving them. At the high end of socio-partisan sorting, this becomes far more difficult to imagine.

*ANES Replication*

The results from the Polimetrix data are largely supported by using the ANES Time-Series cumulative file. In Table 4, we test limited versions of hypotheses 2, 4, and 5 using the ANES data.

[Table 4 about here]

Supporting Hypothesis 2, the effect of socio-partisan sorting in the first column is significant even when controlling for a relatively powerful issue constraint. Thus, even when the constraint among issue positions is held constant, the alignment between partisan, religious, and racial identities is capable of informing increases of about 22 percent of the full scale of alignment between partisan and ideological identities.

Hypothesis 4 is also supported in the ANES data, this time measuring affective polarization as the difference between the two party feeling thermometers, scaled to range from 0 to 100. This partisan bias model in Table 4 demonstrates that an increase from most cross-cutting to most sorted partisan, religious, and racial identities increases
the distance between the party feeling thermometers by about 16 degrees. Issue constraint also has a large effect on this type of partisan bias, of nearly twice the magnitude as the effect of socio-partisan sorting. True understanding of the “correct” set of issue positions, therefore, does generate a strong preference for one party over the other. This, however, should be expected. What is more surprising is that even when these issue-based preferences are held constant, the alignment of religious and racial identities with parties is capable of generating equivalent changes in relative party preference. This is evidence that simply linking a party to a religious and racial identity can have large implications for how partisans view their own partisan team and their political opponents.

Partisan Differences

Our fifth hypothesis rests upon the Ellis and Stimson (2012) finding that the number of symbolic conservatives who are operationally liberal is far higher than the number of symbolic liberals who are operationally conservative. This suggests to us that Republicans (the party more associated with conservatism) may have grown socially sorted more quickly than their issue positions could explain. In this sense, we expect to see that the Republican Party has seen a faster and deeper alignment of their partisan, racial, and religious identities than has the Democratic Party. In fact, as Ellis and Stimson (2012, pg. 133) explain,

“One can be a ‘conservative’ in religion, a ‘conservative’ when it comes to morally traditional lifestyle choices, or a ‘conservative’ in politics. So long as religion, lifestyle, and politics remain separable domains, this usage of the same language has no consequences…millions of Americans who know that they are religious conservatives or that they approve of a ‘conservative’ approach to child rearing and family life are simultaneously confused by what ‘conservative’ means in politics.”

If the Republican Party is identifying more strongly with the conservative label because of an increasing “conservative” religious alignment with the party, we should be able to see this occurring within the Republican Party over time. We can use the ANES cumulative data file to get a sense of whether this is occurring. Due to the more limited social identity measures in the ANES, we expect this to be a noisy measure, but believe it is sufficient to indicate general trends and provide support for the findings demonstrated by the Polimetrix data.
In Figure 4, we present the simple mean levels of the socio-partisan sorting score in the ANES data, divided by party. The result is a slightly unexpected partisan difference. In fact, Republicans since 1964 have always been and continue to be substantially more socially sorted than have Democrats. Democratic partisans, however, have seen a more marked increase in mean levels of sorting. Republicans, with a great deal of noise but a clear trend, have gone from a socio-partisan sorting score of about 0.32 in 1964 to a score of 0.38 in 2012. Democrats have gone from a mean score of .16 in 1964 to about .28 in 2012. This means that during this period, those who identify as Republicans have increasingly identified as Evangelicals, and decreasingly identified as secular or Black, while those who identify as Democrats have increasingly identified as secular and Black, and decreasingly identified as Evangelical. Again, this data is not entirely reliable due to its limited measure of social identification, but it is clear that there is a partisan difference in levels of socio-partisan sorting as measured here.

Simply demonstrating differences in mean levels of socio-partisan sorting, however, is only the first step toward examining the relative effects of socio-partisan sorting on Republicans and Democrats. Columns 2 and 4 in Table 4 take up the question of whether or not the effects of socio-partisan sorting are variable across partisan groups. Given the relationship between conservative Christianity and Republican partisanship (Patrikios, 2008), we could expect that the political consequences of Republican identity sorting relative Democratic sorting are more profound. As Model 2 indicates, the differences observed in Figure 4 do appear to be consequential for the degree to which partisans sort ideologically. As individuals transition from minimum to maximum values of socio-partisan sorting we see a different effect on partisan-ideological sorting for Democrats and Republicans.

The red line in Figure 5 illustrates the effect of socio-partisan sorting on Partisan-Ideological sorting among Republicans, while the blue line shows the effect among Democrats. Here, we find that while Republicans are similarly ideologically sorted as Democrats at the minimum value of socio-partisan sorting, this effect changes for fully-sorted partisans. Republicans who score maximum values on socio-partisan sorting are roughly six points more sorted ideologically than their Democratic counterparts. In other words, when party, religion, and race are cross-cutting, Republicans are similarly
ideologically sorted in comparison with Democrats. When party, religion, and race are highly aligned, Republicans are significantly more ideologically sorted than Democrats. Republicans know that they are on the conservative team when they are also Evangelical and White. Democrats are less powerfully informed by their religion and race about whether or not they are on the liberal team.

[Figure 5 about here]

VII Discussion
A traditional understanding of identity politics is one in which single social groups affect political action and opinion to a significant extent. We consider the results presented here to represent a “new identity politics” in the sense that these single social identities not only have effects on politics in isolation, but they have significantly greater effects when understood in relation to each other. In particular, when partisan identities line up with religious and racial identities, particularly among Republicans, ideological identities grow far more powerful and powerfully aligned with partisanship. In fact, the effect of Republicans’ religion and race on their ideological identities is stronger than their effects on Republicans’ actual issue positions (though these are also affected to some extent). We believe that these results offer insight into why Ellis and Stimson (2012) found so many more “conflicted conservatives” than “conflicted liberals.” As Republicans grow increasingly socially sorted, their ideological labels fall in line with their partisan labels, but their attitudes lag behind. The result is a group of people who are more politically team-based than their issue positions alone could possibly explain.

In two separate sets of data, using two separate approaches to measurement, we have demonstrated that the alignment of partisan, religious, and racial identities is better able to pull partisan and ideological identities together than either religious or racial identities alone could do. Furthermore, we have demonstrated that this effect can occur independently of changes in issue positions. For partisans, religion and race point to ideological tribes, even when opinions are unchanging.

We have also shown that a traditional view of identity politics, which would expect single identities to affect identity-related issues, is not telling a full story. While a traditional identity politics approach would expect to find that religious identification affects the intensity of attitudes toward abortion and gay marriage, we find that in three of four cases, the combination of party, race, and religion is a stronger predictor of these
The combination of these three social identities is also a better predictor of general issue coherence than any one of them alone.

Importantly, the effects of socio-partisan sorting are not only limited to our understanding of ideological tribe and content. When religious and racial identities fall in line with party, partisans tend to more strongly dislike their political opponents. Whether measured as a willingness to marry a partisan opponent, or a simple difference in feeling thermometers, partisans with a well-aligned set of religious and racial identities are far less tolerant of opposing partisans than are partisans. Those with cross-cutting partisan, religious, and racial identities are more likely to welcome the opposing team into their lives. This is true even when issue positions are unchanging. It is therefore not a simple reflection of issue disagreements, it is a social distance that partisans feel from one another when they grow apart in religion and race.

Finally, the effects we present here are slightly stronger among Republicans, but this result may change as Democrats’ socio-partisan sorting scores catch up to those of Republicans. Our research argues that as this process plays out, simple examinations of single identities in driving political behavior are no longer sufficient. Identity politics is a far more powerful concept if we consider the way in which multiple political identities work in concert, rather than isolating each one and examining them in turn. The study of American political behavior demands a more comprehensive approach to identity.
References


Table 1. The Effect of Social Identities and Social Identity Sorting on Partisan-Ideological Sorting

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Source: 2011 YouGov sample
Notes: *p<0.05, **p<0.01
Table 2. The Effect of Social Identities and Social Identity Sorting on Moral Issues

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Source: 2011 YouGov sample
Notes: *p<0.05, **p<0.01
### Table 3. The Effect of Social Identities and Social Identity Sorting on Probability of Marrying an Individual Belonging to Opposite Party

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Source: 2011 YouGov sample
Notes: *p<0.05, **p<0.01
Figure 1. The Effect of Socio-partisan sorting on Partisan-Ideological sorting

Source: Estimates derived from Model 5, Table 1.
Notes: Dotted lines represent 95 percent confidence intervals
Figure 2. Effect of Socio-partisan Sorting on Policy Attitudes

A: Abortion

B: Gay marriage

Source: Estimates derived from Table 2 models
Notes: Dotted lines represent 95 percent confidence intervals. Y-axis represents liberal-conservative scale.
Socio-partisan sorting

Figure 3. Effect of Socio-partisan Sorting on Probability of Marrying an Individual Belonging to Opposite Party

Source: Estimates derived from Model 2, Table 3
Figure 4. Socio-partisan identity sorting in the CANES, 1952-2014

Notes: Socio-partisan sorting comprises the overlap among an individual’s self-professed strength of religious identification (or lack thereof), strength of racial group identification, and strength of partisan identification. “Left” leaning sorting comprises Democratic identification, secular religious identity and black racial identification (and penalizes evangelical identification and white identification); “right” leaning sorting includes Republican identification, evangelical identification, and white racial identification (and penalizes secular identification and black racial identification).
Table 4. The Effect of Socio-partisan Sorting on PID-Ideological Sorting, Issue Consistency, and Partisan Bias

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Source: ANES Time-Series
Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; *p<0.05, **p<0.01
Figure 5. The Effect of Socio-partisan Sorting on Partisan-Ideological Sorting, Conditional on PID

Notes: Dotted lines represent 95 percent confidence intervals
Appendix A  Polimetrix Survey Items (item numbers retained for order information)

Issue Positions:
We would now like to ask your opinion about five issues that many people feel are politically relevant.

6. Do you think the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the United States to live should be:
   Increased a lot
   Increase a little
   Left the same
   Decreased a little
   Decreased a lot
   Don't know

7. How important is this issue to you?
   Very important
   Somewhat important
   Not very important
   Not at all important

8. In general, do you support or oppose the health care reform law that was passed in 2010?
   Strongly support
   Somewhat support
   Neither support or oppose
   Somewhat oppose
   Strongly oppose
   Don’t know

9. How important is this issue to you?
   Very important
   Somewhat important
   Not very important
   Not at all important

10. There has been some discussion about abortion during recent years. Which one of the opinions below best agrees with your view?
   By law, abortion should never be permitted.
   The law should permit abortion only in case of rape, incest, or when the woman's life is in danger.
   The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or when the woman's life is in danger.
   By law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice.
   Don’t know

11. How important is this issue to you?
   Very important
   Somewhat important
   Not very important
   Not at all important
12. In general, do you support or oppose same-sex marriage?
   Strongly support
   Somewhat support
   Neither
   Somewhat oppose
   Strongly oppose

13. How important is this issue to you?
   Very important
   Somewhat important
   Not very important
   Not at all important
   Don't know

14. Which is more important--reducing the federal budget deficit, even if the unemployment rate remains high, or reducing the unemployment rate, even if the federal budget deficit remains high?
   Reducing the deficit is much more important
   Reducing the deficit is a little more important
   Both are equally important
   Reducing unemployment is a little more important
   Reducing unemployment is much more important
   Don't know

15. How important is this issue to you?
   Very important
   Somewhat important
   Not very important
   Not at all important

IDENTITY:
Now, we would like to ask you a few questions about political and other group associations you may have:

16. Imagine a seven-point scale on which the people’s political views are arranged from people with extremely liberal views to people with extremely conservative views. Where would you place yourself on this scale?
   Very liberal
   Liberal
   Slightly liberal
   Moderate/ no preference
   Slightly conservative
   Conservative
   Very conservative
Socio-partisan sorting

[The wording of the next five items corresponds to Liberal or Conservative response to item 16. Moderates skip to item 22.]

18. How important is being Liberal/Conservative to you?
   Extremely important
   Very important
   Not very important
   Not important at all

19. How well does the term Liberal/Conservative describe you?
   Extremely well
   Very well
   Not very well
   Not at all

20. When talking about Liberals/Conservatives how often do you use “we” instead of “they”?
   All of the time
   Most of the time
   Some of the time
   Rarely
   Never

21. To what extent do you think of yourself as being a Liberal/Conservative?
   A great deal
   Somewhat
   Very Little
   Not at all

22. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, or an Independent?
   Republican
   Democrat
   Independent

22a. IF INDEPENDENT: Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party?
   Closer to Republicans
   Closer to Democrats
   Pure Independent

[The wording of the next five items corresponds to Democrat or Republican response to items 22 and 22a. Only Pure Independents from Item 22a skip to item 27]

23. How important is being a Democrat/Republican to you?
   Extremely important
   Very important
   Not very important
   Not important at all
24. How well does the term Democrat/Republican describe you?
   *Extremely well*
   *Very well*
   *Not very well*
   *Not at all*

25. When talking about Democrats/Republicans how often do you use “we” instead of “they”?
   *All of the time*
   *Most of the time*
   *Some of the time*
   *Rarely*
   *Never*

26. To what extent do you think of yourself as being a Democrat/Republican?
   *A great deal*
   *Somewhat*
   *Very Little*
   *Not at all*

27. Would you consider yourself to be an Evangelical Christian?
   *Yes*
   *No*

**If yes, answer the next 5 items. If no, skip to item 32.**

28. How important is being an Evangelical Christian to you?
   *Extremely important*
   *Very important*
   *Not very important*
   *Not important at all*

29. How well does the term Evangelical Christian describe you?
   *Extremely well*
   *Very well*
   *Not very well*
   *Not at all*

30. When talking about Evangelical Christians how often do you use “we” instead of “they”?
   *All of the time*
   *Most of the time*
   *Some of the time*
   *Rarely*
   *Never*

31. To what extent do you think of yourself as being an Evangelical Christian?
   *A great deal*
   *Somewhat*
   *Very Little*
   *Not at all*
32. When it comes to religion, would you consider yourself to be a secular person?
Yes
No

If yes, answer the next 5 items. If no, skip to item 37.

33. How important is being secular to you?
Extremely important
Very important
Not very important
Not important at all

34. How well does the term secular describe you?
Extremely well
Very well
Not very well
Not at all

35. When talking about secular people how often do you use “we” instead of “they”?
All of the time
Most of the time
Some of the time
Rarely
Never

36. To what extent do you think of yourself as being a secular person?
A great deal
Somewhat
Very Little
Not at all

42. Are you:
Caucasian (White)
African-American (Black)
Hispanic/Latino
Asian
Native American
None of the above

If Black, answer the next 5 items. If not Black, skip to item 47.

43. How important is being Black to you?
Extremely important
Very important
Not very important
Not important at all

44. How well does the term Black describe you?
Extremely well
Very well
41. When talking about Black people how often do you use “we” instead of “they”?
All of the time
Most of the time
Some of the time
Rarely
Never

46. To what extent do you think of yourself as being a Black person?
A great deal
Somewhat
Very Little
Not at all

47. To what extent do you consider yourself to be a Tea Party supporter or opponent?
Strong Tea Party supporter
Moderate Tea Party supporter
Weak Tea Party supporter
No opinion about the Tea Party
Weak Tea Party opponent
Moderate Tea Party opponent
Strong Tea Party opponent

If score 1-3, answer the next 5 items. If score 4-8, skip to item 52.

48. How important is being a Tea Party supporter to you?
Extremely important
Very important
Not very important
Not important at all

49. How well does the term Tea Party describe you?
Extremely well
Very well
Not very well
Not at all

50. When talking about Tea Party supporters how often do you use “we” instead of “they”?
All of the time
Most of the time
Some of the time
Rarely
Never

51. To what extent do you think of yourself as being a Tea Party supporter?
A great deal
Somewhat
Very Little
Not at all
Appendix B  Explanation of the Socio-Partisan Sorting measure

For ease of explanation, Table B1 presents two potential Republican subjects, one who scores the highest possible score on the socio-partisan sorting scale, and another who receives the lowest possible score. Individual A in this example would score highest on Republican identity and Evangelical identity. This score cannot rise any higher, but could fall if this individual identified less strongly with her party or any of her party-consistent groups. It could also fall if she identified at all with any of the party-inconsistent groups. Individual B, still a Republican (because she chose to answer the traditional 7-point party identification scale on the Republican end of the scale), holds the weakest possible Republican social identity, the strongest secular identity, and the strongest Black identity. Her score could not fall lower, but could increase by identifying less strongly with a cross-cutting identity, or by identifying at all with any of the party-consistent identities, or more strongly with Republicans. The distribution of the socio-partisan sorting variable, after recoding, is presented in Figure B1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table B1. Example Calculation of Socio-Partisan Sorting Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual A - Highest-Score Republican</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Republican Identity=1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democratic Identity=.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical Identity=1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secular Identity=.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Identity=.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Sorting Score= (1 + 1)/2=1</td>
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</table>

*Notes: Sorting score rescaled to range from 0 to 1 by adding .667, then dividing by 1.66667. The lowest recoded score is .11. 53 respondents scored a perfect 1.*
Figure B1. Distribution of Socio-partisan Sorting (n=450)

Source: 2011 Polimetrix Survey
Notes: For further reference, the distributions of each identity scale are also included here. These only include those individuals who have already stated that they are part of the group.
Figure B2. Evangelical Social Identity Scale (n=307)

Source: 2011 Polimetrix Survey

Notes: Evangelical social identity is operationalized as an additive index of four-part responses to questions: 1) How important is being an [insert group label] to you?; 2) How well does the term [insert group label] describe you?; 3) When talking about [insert group label] how often do you use “we” instead of “they”? 4) To what extent do you think of yourself as being a [insert group label]?
Socio-partisan sorting

Figure B3. Secular Social Identity Scale (n=381)

Source: 2011 Polimetrix Survey
Figure B4. Black Social Identity Scale (n=123)

Source: 2011 Polimetrix Survey
Socio-partisan sorting

Figure B5. Partisan Social Identity Scale

5A. Republican Social Identity (n=450)

5B. Democratic Social Identity Scale (n=492)

Source: 2011 Polimetrix Survey
Socio-partisan sorting

Figure B6. Ideology Social Identity Scale

6A. Liberal Social Identity Scale (n=478)

Figure 6B. Conservative Social Identity Scale (n=363)