

Exploring the Psychological Foundations of Ideological and Social Sorting

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Americans are sorting ideologically: Liberals and conservatives are more likely to respectively identify as Democrats and Republicans. They are sorting socially as well: Partisans like and trust copartisans more than opposing partisans. Existing explanations for these phenomena rely on exogenous factors, such as elite polarization. But exogenous explanations cannot fully explain variation in sorting. We argue that psychological characteristics can help explain the tendency to sort ideologically or socially. Specifically, we investigate an individual's responsiveness to internal values versus normative social pressures as a determinant of sorting. We test this theory with several nationally representative surveys, as well as one survey experiment, and find strong support that an individual's own tendency to respond to social cues, as opposed to ideological values, has important consequences for this process. Our work allows for a better understanding of the psychological factors that promote partisan sorting and for interpreting variation in the degree to which citizens sort into partisan groups.

KEY WORDS: ideology, polarization, self-monitoring, sorting

As the first two decades of the twenty-first century come to a close, among the most important narratives to emerge from within American politics is that of political polarization. The American parties are now more ideologically divided than at nearly any point in the past 100 years (e.g., see Bafumi & Shapiro, 2009; Fiorina, Pope, & Abrams, 2005; McCarty, Poole, & Rosenthal, 2006). Polarization has increased, and so too has a related phenomenon: *sorting*. Voters from each party appear to be more ideologically consistent relative to decades past (Fiorina et al., 2005; Levendusky, 2009). In other words, fewer conservatives identify as Democrats, and fewer liberals identify as Republicans. American partisans are *sorting* themselves into the political parties on the basis of their ideological tendencies.

Americans are not only engaging in ideological sorting, but they are sorting socially as well: Democrats and Republicans appear more likely to seek out fellow copartisans, rather than fellows with whom they disagree. Partisans prefer to live, work, and interact near one another and far from members of the other party. For example, Bishop (2008) observes that voters appear to make real-estate decisions based on the partisan and/or ideological composition of a neighborhood. Mummolo

and Nall (2017) cast doubt on the degree to which Americans can logistically choose their place of living based on their political preferences, but they nevertheless demonstrate a strong preference for living among copartisans. In addition, individuals seek out political like-mindedness in their discussion groups both in person (Mutz, 2002) and online (Barbera, 2014; Barbera, Jost, Nagler, Tucker, & Bonneau, 2015; Conover et al. (2011). Americans are thus sorting along social lines, not just ideological ones.

Existing explanations for this growing phenomenon rely on exogenous factors, such as changes to information technology and elite polarization. But exogenous explanations alone cannot fully explain variation in sorting. Why might some Americans respond to elite cues to sort more than others? If partisan rancor drives partisans to avoid one another in social settings, why do some nevertheless exhibit more social sorting and others less so?

We argue that the tendency to sort ideologically or socially is driven not only by external influences but also by psychological characteristics. We explore both theoretical and empirical evidence that two forms of sorting—*partisan-social* and *partisan-ideological*—have different and, indeed, conflicting psychological origins.¹ Building from work developed in both psychology and political science, we theorize that individuals who are responsive to normative social pressures should be motivated to avoid partisan conflict; they may subsequently engineer their own social surroundings to be as politically homogeneous as possible. That is, they will form ideological and partisan echo chambers and exhibit a heightened degree of partisan-social sorting. These homogeneous settings may subsequently lead to greater polarization, as partisans will rely on qualitatively different social and information networks (Klar, 2014; Klar & Shmargad, 2017). On the other hand, individuals who are less responsive to normative pressures in their social surroundings should be less of a concern, and, as a result, they should be more inclined to rely on their existing political predispositions when formulating political preferences. In short, one's susceptibility to pervasive social norms should condition whether one engages in partisan-social versus partisan-ideological sorting.

We rely on a well-established construct developed in social psychology, *self-monitoring*, to operationalize one's susceptibility to normative social pressures, and we empirically test how self-monitoring shapes the tendency to respond to and seek out politically congenial environments. We argue that an individual's own tendency to respond to their social cues, as opposed to their own ideological values, has important consequences for this process. Our work allows for a better understanding of the psychological factors that promote partisan sorting and for interpreting variation in the degree to which citizens sort themselves into the political parties.

The Dynamics of Sorting

Partisan-ideological sorting is the process by which ideology increasingly aligns with partisan identities. Conservatives have gravitated towards the GOP, liberals towards the Democratic Party, with the result being that political parties are now more ideologically cohesive than in decades past. Perhaps the simplest way to illustrate partisan-ideological sorting, and how pervasive it has become, is to simply plot the pairwise correlation between party identification and ideological self-placement. Figure 1 displays the bivariate correlation between party identification and ideological self-placement since the early 1970s. While ideology is correlated with party identification through much of the series, it is not until the 1990s that the correlation exceeds 0.30. Our estimate is in excess of 0.5 in

¹The literature on sorting, polarization, and partisan prejudice uses slightly different terms to denote these processes. For instance, Mason's (2015, 2018) definition of "social sorting" refers to aligning social identities with partisan choice. Iyengar and colleagues (Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes, 2012; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015) use the term "affective polarization" to refer to the notion that the gap between positive affect towards one's own party and negative affect towards the opposing party has grown and that partisans are more likely to prefer social distance from out-party members (Druckman & Levendusky, forthcoming; Lelkes & Westwood, 2016). These processes are likely related, but for the purposes of our work, we differentiate partisan-ideological sorting from its more behaviorally orientated, partisan-social sorting counterpart.

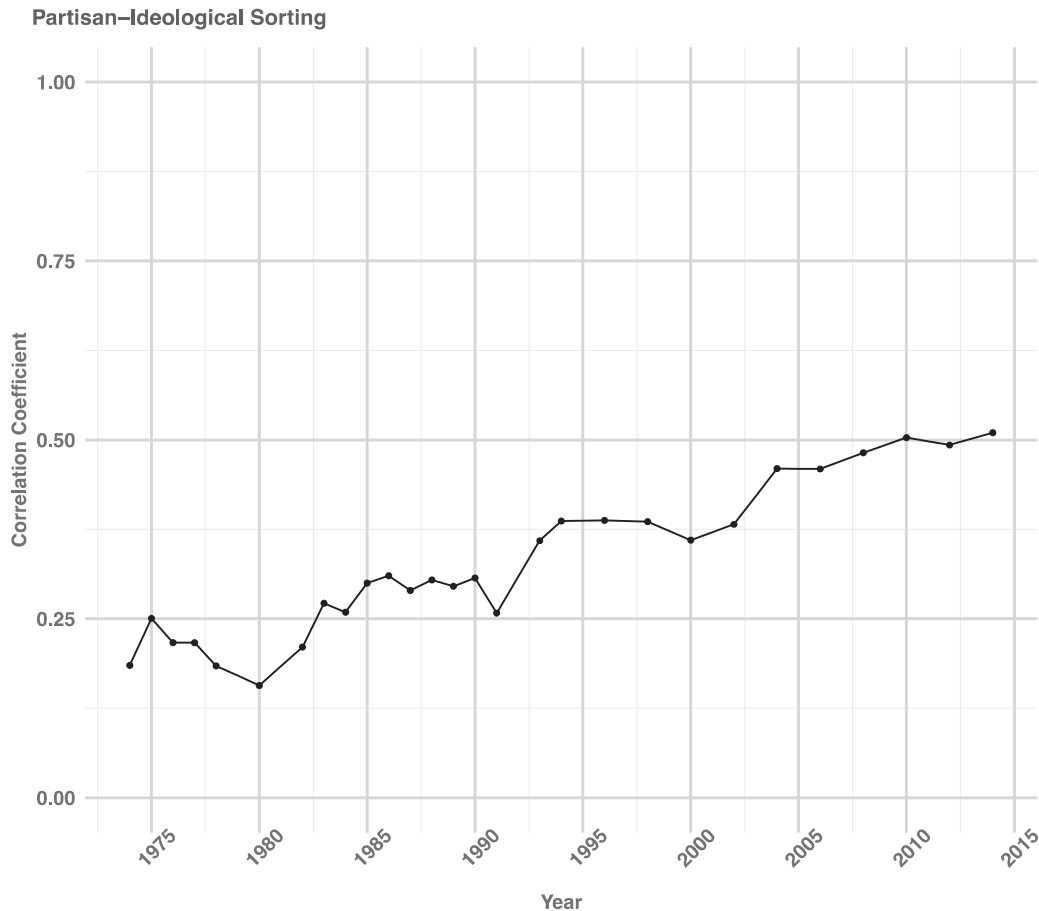


Figure 1. Partisan–ideological sorting. Entries represent zero-order correlations between party identification and ideology. Data are from the cumulative General Social Survey (GSS) dataset

2014, suggesting that over 25% of the variance in party identification can be explained by ideological self-identification.

Sorting may also be social in nature, with partisans generally preferring to live and interact with like-minded partisans. Figure 2 presents evidence of *partisan-social sorting*. We rely on a survey question asked in the 2016 Congressional Campaign Analysis Project, “Suppose a new neighbor is moving in next door. How would you feel if that next-door neighbor was a Democrat? Would you be unhappy, happy, or would it make no difference?” The same question was asked with respect to a Republican target. Here, we present the percentage of respondents who prefer living near someone with the same party identification—that is, Republicans reporting preference for a Republican neighbor and Democrats preferring a Democratic neighbor. The left panel displays the reported happiness versus unhappiness with respect to living next door to someone of the opposing party. Approximately one-fifth of the sample expresses some degree of unhappiness if a member of the opposing party moves next door, while respondents are generally much happier with the prospect of a fellow partisan moving in next door. Other scholarly work has shown that social distance between partisans has increased over time. Notably, Iyenger et al. (2012) demonstrate that Americans’ preference for their fellow partisans over opposing partisans has increased steadily over time—even as their preference for their own racial or ethnic groups has decreased.

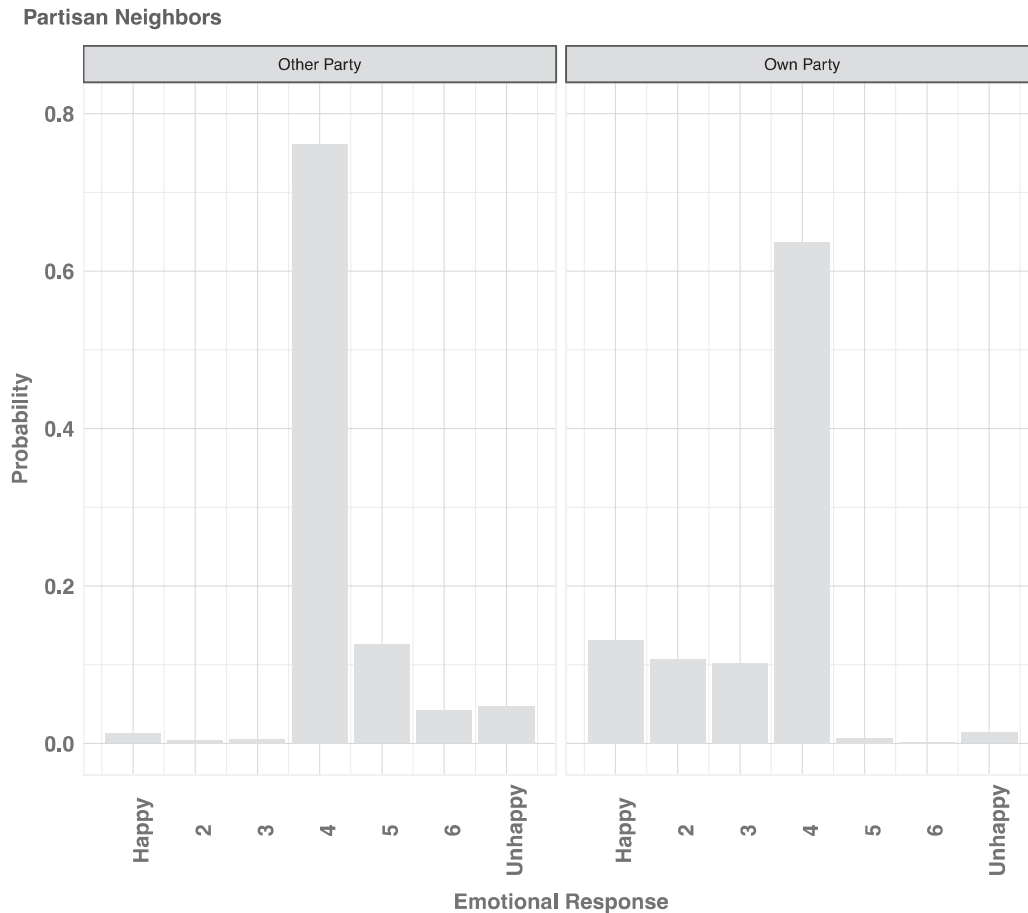


Figure 2. Partisan social sorting. Neighbor preference. Entries represent proportion of respondents who report happiness versus unhappiness with respect to an in- or out-party member moving next door. Data are from the 2016 Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project. Leaners are classified as partisans, and Independents are excluded from this figure.

These processes have a number of normative consequences. On one hand, sorting promotes clearer informational cues from party elites (Levendusky, 2009), which can encourage participation (Abramowitz, 2010). On the other hand, Mason (2018) illustrates that as America's partisan camps become increasingly homogeneous, cross-cutting identity groups, once seen as a staple of partisan compromise, are on the verge of extinction. For example, Klar (2018) demonstrates that women from opposing parties no longer view their gender as a unifying tie; instead, it is perceived as a divisive political identity. A parallel line of research demonstrates that those who are *affectively polarized*—demonstrating heightened positive affect towards one's own party and negative affect towards the competing party—are more likely to prefer interaction with in-party members, while suppressing hostile information from out-party members (Iyengar & Westwood, 2015; Lelkes & Westwood, 2016). Taken together, sorting has contributed to partisan incivility, vilification of out-party members, and seemingly intractable policy conflict.

Scholars have identified several (and conceptually overlapping) systemic and institutional explanations for why Americans have increasingly sorted in these observable manners. Some experts point toward the ascendance of religion, arguing that its role in politics has changed the issues that animate voter decisions, as well as the tenor of partisan politics (Hetherington & Weiler, 2009;

Hunter, 1991; Layman, 2001; Weber & Thornton, 2012). Others point directly toward elites, showing, for instance that Americans receive increasingly distinct and ideologically consistent messages from party leaders (Garner & Palmer, 2011). This explanation also explains why involved and attentive voters are then more likely to hold ideologically consistent attitudes (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2006, 2008; Hetherington & Weiler, 2009; Johnston, Lavine, & Federico, 2017). Finally, changes to information technology—from digital media, to 24-hour news channels, and social media—may facilitate sorting. For instance, Levendusky (2013) and Davis and Dunaway (2016) draw upon changes to the media landscape, demonstrating that sorting is more likely to occur in contexts with greater media choice. In these contexts, voters are more likely to self-select into ideological echo chambers (Davis & Dunaway, 2016; Levendusky, 2013). Similarly, ideologically homogeneous social settings (Klar, 2014) and social media environments (Klar & Shmargad, 2017) facilitate a greater alignment between partisanship and ideological belief.

Self-Monitoring and the Foundations of Sorting

Explanations for sorting have, by and large, neglected its psychological determinants. This omission is to the detriment of scholars interested in understanding the roots of sorting, as psychological theories suggest that individual-level traits are, at least in part, responsible for who sorts and whether that sorting is *partisan-ideological* or *partisan-social* in nature. For decades, political psychologists have considered the extent by which human behavior is moderated by dispositional characteristics (for example, attitudes, values, or emotions) versus external factors (for example, social norms and cues in their environment). Indeed, understanding the extent to which our behaviors are shaped by external or internal factors is arguably as old as the field of psychology itself (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000; James, 1890), with many of the major psychology research paradigms echoing the centrality and interaction between internal characteristics and situational factors (McCrae, 1993). Those are the issues that motivate our work, as we consider the extent to which ideological preferences versus social settings guide voter behavior. Are voters motivated by their internal beliefs or concerns for conformity and a general need to “fit in”? In particular, we examine how one’s dispositional tendency to rely on social cues versus internal traits affects the likelihood to sort.

All individuals rely, to some extent, on social cues. Voters are “social citizens” (Sinclair, 2012), and political information is filtered through and spread by one’s peer group (Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1987), sometimes to great effect. The partisan make-up (Klar, 2014) and structure (Klar & Shmargad, 2017) of one’s social settings can determine the ideological extremity of her own subsequent political views. Social settings can influence attitudinal ambivalence and political engagement (Mutz, 2002) and the strength of political attitudes (Druckman & Nelson, 2003). Contact with outgroups in our social environments appears to be a key determinant of our attitudes about outgroups specifically (Allport, 1954) and of public policy more generally (for example, Johnson & Jacobson, 2005). But not all individuals are equally likely to base their behavior on the social cues in their surroundings.

We examine this varying tendency to rely on external versus internal factors in terms of “self-monitoring” (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). Individuals who are high in self-monitoring exhibit “expressive control,” or a “strategic cultivation of public appearances” (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000, p. 530; Snyder, 1974). High self-monitors “chronically strive, in chameleon-like fashion, to appear to be the type of person called for by each situation that confronts them” (Snyder & Cantor, 1980, p. 223). In interpersonal relationships, they are more inclined to rely on outward, physical appearance (Glick, DeMorest, & Hotze, 1988), and they tend to adopt an “uncommitted” orientation toward their own relationships (Snyder & Simpson, 1984). For instance, Snyder, Simpson, and Gangestad (1986) show that high self-monitors are more likely to engage in casual sexual relationships with partners who do not have similar psychological characteristics. Moreover, high self-monitors are more likely to regulate their behavior based on external cues for how they think they ought to behave (Gangestad

& Snyder, 2000; Klein, Snyder, & Livingston, 2004). They are susceptible to salient social cues and are generally prone to condition their preferences on what they deem a socially appropriate response.

Low self-monitors, on the other hand, are less responsive to social pressures and are more responsive to internal predispositions guiding behavior (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). The self-monitoring construct is generally thought to entail two related facets: impression management and social performing. Impression management is the tendency to participate in “other-directed behavior,” effectively recognizing social cues and using these cues to guide attitudes and behavior (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). Social performing, on the other hand, is the ability to moderate one’s behavior to cultivate social relationships and avoid social conflict.²

Self-monitoring, acting, and impression management. In circumstances where beliefs conflict with social norms, self-monitoring tends to moderate the expression of these beliefs, likely to avoid social ostracism and interpersonal conflict. High self-monitors are more concerned with projecting a positive self-image (Krosnick & Sedikides, 1990; Kulik & Taylor, 1981), and they are more likely to mask emotions when a particular emotion is perceived to be inappropriate (Friedman & Miller-Herringer, 1991). Low self-monitors are more likely guided by internal dispositions—such as attitudes, values, and belief structures; they are less likely to mask their feelings and beliefs in social situations (Friedman & Miller-Herringer, 1991; Graziano & Bryant, 1998). For instance, Krosnick and Sedikides (1990) show that when confronted with unflattering information about human nature (e.g., in a group setting, most individuals will fail to help a stranger suffering from an epileptic seizure), high self-monitors were more likely to discount this information, thereby casting themselves in a more favorable light. Relative to low self-monitors, high self-monitors tend to be concerned with impression management. This leads to greater awareness of social cues, particularly those cues that cultivate a positive social image (Snyder, 1979).

Relative to low self-monitors, high self-monitors generally possess social scripts applicable to a variety of social situations (Douglas, 1983; Tyler, Kearns, & McIntyre, 2016). In a parallel line of work drawing on the functional nature of attitudes (see Katz, 1960), high self-monitors rely on qualitatively different motives in regarding the adoption and expression of attitudes. In particular, high self-monitors are more likely to display *social-adjustive* attitudes; these are attitudes that serve to facilitate group cohesion, minimize conflict, and avoid ostracism (DeBono, 1987). Low self-monitors, on the other hand, hold attitudes that are *value-expressive* in nature. Low self-monitors are generally more concerned with the functional expression of internal predispositions, irrespective of social context. With respect to consumer psychology, for instance, DeBono and colleagues (DeBono, 1987, 2006; DeBono & Edmonds, 1989) find that high self-monitors are more susceptible to the aesthetic appeal of goods and services, they adjust their attitudes to fit in and that they form attitudes around image rather than quality. In politics, Lavine and Snyder (1996) similarly show that high self-monitors are influenced by persuasive message that focused on the social utility of voting, rather than expressing one’s political values.

Given the importance of self-image, high self-monitors often adjust their beliefs based on pervasive social norms. Scholarly work has demonstrated that self-monitoring is an important moderator in the expression of tolerance versus prejudicial beliefs. For instance, Klein et al. (2004) examine the extent to which prejudice is suppressed in social situations in which egalitarianism is valued. In this study, high self-monitors were far more likely to suppress their prejudicial beliefs when they believed they were in the presence of a diverse audience. Among respondents who possessed

²Controversy has surrounded whether self-monitoring is a dichotomous “class” that is a stable, genetic personality “type.” This taxonomic approach implies that self-monitoring is a binary personality characteristic. However, the taxonomic does not necessarily indicate that dichotomizing a continuous measure will effectively approximate these classes (Gangestad & Snyder, 1985, 1991; Miller & Thayer, 1989). Wilmot (2015), however, demonstrates that the latent structure of self-monitoring is dimensional—not dichotomous—consisting of three continuous factors (extroversion, other-directedness, and acting/performing).

prejudicial beliefs, high self-monitors were substantially more likely to reveal their prejudice when in the presence of a prejudiced audience (see also Berinsky, 2004). Weber, Lavine, Huddy, and Federico (2014) similarly show that high self-monitors are less likely to rely on racial stereotypes to evaluate race-targeted policy. High self-monitors are also less likely to choose the midpoint when answering questions about race, due to the sensitive nature of explicit racism questions (Weber et al., 2014). Berinsky (2004) similarly argues that high self-monitors are more likely to adjust their beliefs according to the (un)popularity of a particular opinion. Taken together, these findings underscore the centrality of projecting a positive image, particularly in social contexts in which expressed beliefs have the potential to violate cherished democratic norms, such as tolerance, respect, and egalitarianism.

The proclivity to suppress or moderate one's own attitudes based on pervasive social norms can have important connections to democratic politics. When it comes to making electoral decisions, high self-monitors place more emphasis on social consensus regarding candidate choice (Girvan, Weaver, & Snyder, 2010), and they are unwilling to admit their true partisan preferences when exposed to political disagreement (Klar & Krupnikov, 2016). High self-monitors are also more likely to suppress their prejudices regarding minority political candidates (Terkildsen, 1993) and are less likely to reveal intolerant preferences towards marginalized social groups (Berinsky, 2004). Among political liberals, high self-monitors with high levels of racial resentment disguise their prejudice by reporting more tolerant racial attitudes (Feldman & Huddy, 2005). Moreover, Weber and colleagues (2014) show that high self-monitors are particularly susceptible to observable levels of racial diversity when revealing their attitudes towards racial groups.

Low self-monitors, on the other hand, are less susceptible to social norms, and they tend to be guided by internal dispositions: values, attitudes, emotions, and traits, for instance. As noted by Gangestad and Snyder (2000), low self-monitors “manifest greater consistency in their behavior expressions of feelings and thoughts expected to be stable, and thus, they ought to show substantial covariation between their self-reports of attitudes and preferences and actual behavioral indicators of them” (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000, p. 53); in short, they “express it as they feel it” (Snyder, 1974, p. 527). Low self-monitors are not impervious to social surroundings, but, rather, they are more heavily guided by an internal compass consisting of dispositional characteristics (Snyder & Cantor, 1980, p. 222). In the political realm, low self-monitors are more likely to express intolerance to marginalized groups (Berinsky, 2004), and they are more likely to functionally match their stereotype tendencies when evaluating race-targeted policies (Weber et al., 2014). They are more likely to be persuaded by arguments that draw on values—that is, internal characteristics—as opposed to the social utility of voting (Lavine & Snyder, 1996).

Self-monitoring approximates the fundamental trade-off between one's susceptibility to social cues versus relying on internal beliefs (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). For this reason, we believe it important to understanding the factors that underlie sorting. We argue that self-monitoring may better help us understand partisan-ideological sorting, as low self-monitors should be more likely to align their ideological preferences with their partisan preferences. We expect to find higher rates of *partisan-ideological* sorting among low self-monitors. However, as previously noted, sorting may be observed in several ways. Bishop (2008) suggests that partisans are increasingly likely to cluster in regions throughout the United States, subsequently exacerbating the Red State–Blue State divide. Thus, sorting also can entail a growing match between an attitudinal and social component, with partisans preferring to surround themselves with like-minded neighbors and affirming information environments. Accordingly, we expect that high self-monitors should be more inclined to engineer their own social settings so as to maximize political homogeneity and minimize political discord; in other words, high self-monitors should engage in and generally exhibit *partisan-social* sorting. Before we turn to our empirical tests of our hypotheses, we further elaborate on the self-monitoring scale.

The Self-Monitoring Scale

Gangestad and Snyder (1985) advance a categorical model of self-monitoring, contending that self-monitoring is a dichotomous latent construct. Self-monitoring is purported to be a relatively stable, biologically informed personality type, whereby high self-monitors are those who are more responsive to external pressures, and low self-monitors are more responsive to internal dispositions (Gangestad & Snyder, 1985, 1991; Miller & Thayer, 1989). Miller and Thayer (1989) and Wilmot (2015) argue self-monitoring is not a personality type, but rather, the latent structure is dimensional and continuous, consisting of several interrelated factors. Delving into the taxonomic versus continuous nature of personality is beyond the scope of our work; however, we do carefully consider the dimensional structure of the self-monitoring construct.³

Researchers often measure self-monitoring with a standard 25-item survey; it has also been abbreviated to 18 questions that ask individuals to describe their typical behavior, largely in social situations. When summed together, these items create the self-monitoring scale. A recurring debate that emerges in the self-monitoring literature is whether this construct is sufficiently different from other stable individual difference variables, such as personality characteristics (Briggs & Cheek, 1988; John, Cheek, & Klohnen, 1996; Snyder, 1974). Indeed, there exist conceptual and empirical overlap between extroversion and self-monitoring (Briggs & Cheek, 1988; Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). Consider the self-monitoring item, “In a social group, I am rarely the center of attention,” which is similar to extroversion and one’s degree of outgoingness in social interactions (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). In addition, scholars often cite the utility of the self-monitoring construct as a way to measuring susceptibility to social desirability pressures (Berinsky, 2004; Weber et al., 2014). Indeed, there exists potential overlap between the Balanced Inventory for Socially Desirable Responding (e.g., “I sometimes tell lies if I have to”) and self-monitoring (e.g., “I would not change my opinions (or the way I do things) in order to please someone else or win their favor.”).

There is conceptual overlap between extroversion, socially desirable responding, and self-monitoring; yet, this is not altogether surprising, given self-monitoring’s focus on general impression management. Existing analyses—for example Gangestad and Snyder’s (2000) meta-analysis of over 5,000 responses from more than 30 research articles, as well as Snyder (1987) and Snyder and Gangestad (1986)—demonstrate that the self-monitoring scale indeed assesses a unitary factor with high reliability and validity.

The items that constitute the self-monitoring scale can be broken down into correlated clusters: one pertaining to acting and public performing (measured with items such as “I would probably make a good actor”) and one pertaining to “other” versus “self” directedness (measured with items like “At parties, I let others keep the jokes and stories going”). The public-performing cluster may be further disaggregated into “theatrical acting” and “social acting” (Lennox, 1988).

We further explore the characteristics of self-monitoring in a series of factor models. Due to space limitations, we present the technical details in the online supporting information.⁴ Our findings indicate that self-monitoring is not a unitary construct; instead, it is characterized by three correlated dimensions, theatrical acting, social acting, and other-directedness factors (see, Gangestad & Snyder, 2000; Lennox, 1988; Lennox & Wolfe, 1984 for similar findings). We also relate these dimensions to two conceptually similar scales, the 10-item personality inventory (TIPI) meant to

³Unfortunately, our representative surveys only include a brief self-monitoring battery, and coupled with sample size concerns, we are unable to address the issue of whether self-monitoring is a latent categorical or continuous construct. While this concern is important, it is also somewhat tangential to our interests concerning how self-monitoring moderates the expression of ideological belief thereby contributing to sorting.

⁴This supplementary appendix and all replication materials can be found at Weber (2018).

approximate the Big-Five personality dimensions (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003) and the 16-item Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR; see Paulhus, 1984).

Though the three factors we identify are correlated with the TIPI and BIDR, there is sufficient remaining variation in the three self-monitoring factors to treat the self-monitoring factors as empirically unique. Taken together, the TIPI and BIDR scales explain 37% of the variance in the other-directedness factor, 29% of the variance in the theatrical acting factor, and 44% of the variance for the social performing factor. Thus, while these psychological covariates are clearly interrelated with self-monitoring, there is unique variation in all three factors, suggesting they are not entirely redundant with personality or socially desirable responding.

Partisan-Ideological Sorting Among Low Self-Monitors

With confidence that self-monitoring indeed represents a relatively unique dispositional trait, we now turn to the substantive implications of self-monitoring. In particular, does an individual's tendency to rely on internal traits versus environmental cues influence the extent to which ideology informs partisan behaviors? As previously noted, literature suggests that individuals who score low in self-monitoring tend to rely on dispositional states. For instance, Weber et al. (2014) show that low self-monitors are more likely to rely on racial stereotypes to evaluate race-targeted policy—an effect that is magnified in settings where racial stereotypes are accessible. Low self-monitors are also less likely to choose the midpoint when answering questions about race (Weber et al., 2014) and are less susceptible to the racial complexion of candidates (Terkildsen, 1993). Berinsky (2004) argues that self-monitoring generally reveals whether an individual is more likely to adjust their beliefs according to the (un)popularity of a particular opinion.

Klar and Krupnikov (2016) demonstrate the utility of self-monitoring pertaining to party identification. Self-monitoring appears to increase the tendency to factor social settings into account when individuals are asked to publicly identify with a party. We extend this reasoning by examining the extent to which self-monitoring moderates the relationship between party attachments and ideological preferences. *We anticipate that ideology will be more diagnostic of party identification among those scoring low on self-monitoring. High self-monitors, due to their sensitivity to normative social pressure, should be less likely to rely on their ideology.*

Our analysis relies on the interaction between self-monitoring and ideology. First, we anticipate that self-monitoring will moderate the link between ideology and positive affect towards one's own party or candidate. Those who are less susceptible to social cues (i.e., low self-monitors) should be more likely to rely on ideological beliefs when forming an affective attachment to the parties and candidates. On the other hand, those scoring high on self-monitoring should be less likely to rely on their ideological preferences. Second, we examine the extent to which voters align their ideology with a particular party at the voting booth by similarly anticipating that ideology will exert a larger effect on voting among low self-monitors. Finally, we examine the interaction between *self-monitoring* \times *ideology* with respect to party and candidate evaluation and expect that one's ideological preferences will be heavily intertwined with these evaluations among low self-monitors.

Measures. To test these expectations, we rely on the 2008 American National Election Studies (ANES) time-series dataset, as this particular nationally representative survey contains several key measures that are necessary to conduct our analyses. We include the full variable description in the online supporting information. We only analyze the 2008 data because the self-monitoring scale was not included in other ANES cross sections. Our primary dependent variable is *party identification*, measured with the standard 7-point self-placement item included in the ANES. We recode this variable as a three-category measure, including Democrat, Republican, and Independent (excluding partisan leaners), and specify a multinomial regression model. We do this to allay concerns about

the multidimensionality of party identification; independents may not fall in between the ideological position of the two major parties.

Party identification is central to understanding the extent to which ideologues “sort” in our data. We test our second expectation that self-monitoring also moderates the expression of ideological voting by examining vote choice (1 = Vote for the Republican candidate John McCain; 0 = Vote for the Democratic candidate Barack Obama). Finally, we explore the extent to which voters demonstrate affective polarization both toward the parties and toward political candidates by relying on feeling thermometer evaluations of the candidates and parties. We include these measures to explore whether ideology leads to liking one’s own party (or candidate) and disliking the opposing party (or candidate). Iyengar and colleagues find that negative affect towards the out-party has increased (Iyengar et al., 2012; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015), though it remains to be determined if conservatives and liberals show similar patterns and whether self-monitoring alters this pattern (see also Druckman & Levendusky, forthcoming).

The 2008 ANES assessed self-monitoring with three questions, which load on the other-directedness and/or theatrical performing factors: (1) “How good or bad of an actor would you be?” (2) “When you’re in a group of people, how often are you the center of attention?” and (3) “When you’re with other people, how often do you put on a show to impress or entertain them?” The items scale together well and demonstrate acceptable levels of internal consistency for a three-item scale ($\alpha = 0.66$). We combined the three items into a summary scale ranging from 0 to 1, with higher scores indicating higher self-monitoring. Finally, we generated an ideology indicator from a 7-point ideological self-placement item, which we rescaled to vary from 0 (*extreme liberal*) to 1 (*extreme conservative*).⁵ We coded all covariates with exception of age (which is years) from 0 to 1.

Party identification. Consistent with previous work showing that self-monitoring influences susceptibility to normative influence (Klar & Krupnikov, 2016) and that low self-monitors are more likely to rely on internal dispositions (Weber et al., 2014), we regressed party identification on self-monitoring, ideology, and the interaction between self-monitoring and ideology, controlling for a number of control variables. Given that the independent variables may not influence the odds of falling in each party identification category equally, we specified a multinomial regression model. We classified those who scored at the midpoint of the PID scale as Independents, those to the right of the midpoint as Republicans, and those to the left as Democrats.

In Table 1, the coefficient for ideology represents the effect of ideology at minimum levels of self-monitoring. Conservatives are significantly less likely to identify as either Democrat or Independent than they are to identify as Republican ($b = -7.70$, $SE = 0.69$). The interaction between *Ideology* \times *Self-Monitoring* represents the change in the effect of ideology on party identification as self-monitoring increases. Relative to low self-monitors, high self-monitors are significantly less likely to rely on ideology when sorting themselves into the two major parties. Indeed, the coefficient shrinks to $b = -3.74$. In other words, the link between ideology and party identification attenuates as self-monitoring increases. We find no evidence to suggest that ideologues opt out of partisan identification by selecting the independent label. The coefficients associated with both *Self-Monitoring* and *Self-Monitoring* \times *Ideology* are nonsignificant in the independent equation in Table 1.

Due to the nonlinearity of these models, the product terms, and the two sets of coefficients, Figure 3 presents the average marginal effect (hereafter, AME) of ideology, with respect to

⁵Ideology was measured in both the pre- and postelection surveys. In the pretest, half the participants were asked the standard 7-point item; the others were asked the item with a truncated number of categories. The postelection item appeared in the traditional manner. To make the analysis tractable, such that we can avoid the consequences of different distributions due to question wording, we only analyze the postelection item.

Table 1. Party Identification Model

	Democrat		Independent	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
Self-Monitoring	-1.79	1.04	-0.86	1.32
Ideology	-7.70	0.69	-4.76	0.89
Self-Monitoring X Ideology	3.96	1.61	1.57	2.13
Catholic	-0.04	0.17	0.02	0.25
No Religion	0.36	0.20	0.50	0.27
Other Religion	1.34	1.52	2.45	1.70
Female	0.35	0.14	0.10	0.20
College	-0.48	0.16	-0.93	0.25
Non-White	2.15	0.19	1.31	0.25
Age	0.01	0.004	-0.004	0.006
Intercept	3.55	0.50	1.67	0.65
<i>N</i>	1534			

Note. Estimates are from multinomial logistic regression using maximum likelihood. Entries are point estimates and standard errors. Bold entries indicate estimate is two times the standard error. Entries are relative to identifying as Republican.

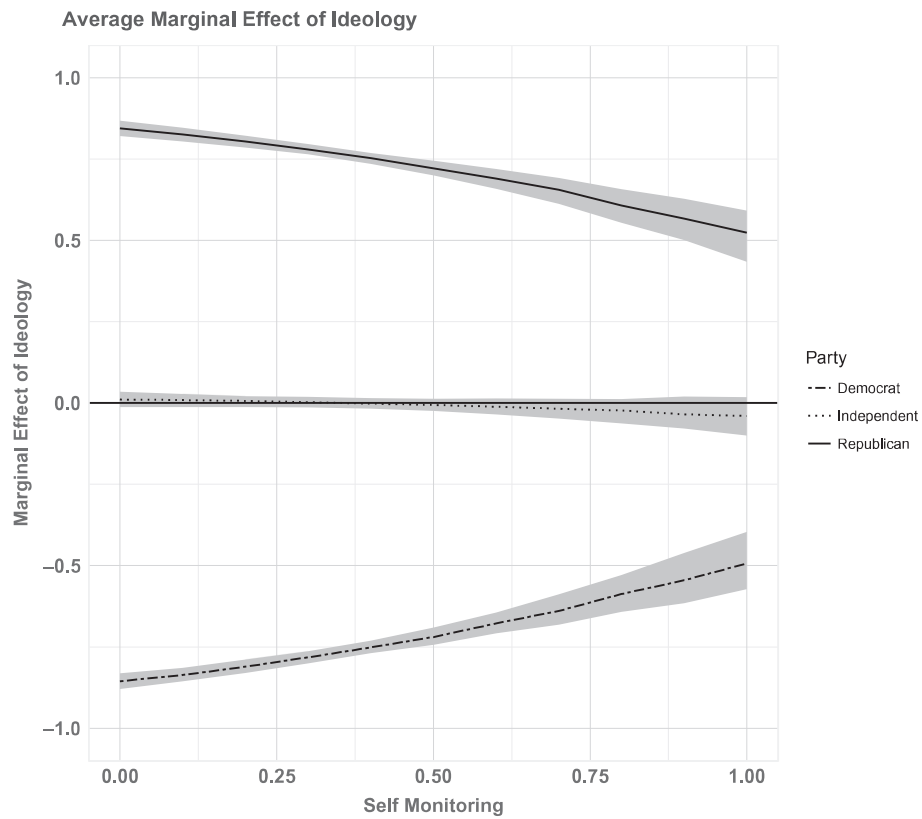


Figure 3. Self-monitoring and sorting. The lines represent the average marginal effect of ideology—scored in the conservative direction—across levels of self-monitoring.

Democratic and Republican identification.⁶ The vertical axis represents the marginal effect of ideology; the horizontal axis is self-monitoring. Because of the nonsignificant effects with respect to independent identification, we do not present predictions for this group. Figure 3 represent the probability of identifying as a Republican given that one is a strong conservative minus the probability of identifying as a Republican given that one is a strong liberal. We execute the same procedure for identifying as Democrat or an Independent. As the marginal effect estimate approaches 1 or -1 , this indicates a larger degree of sorting. Ideologues are more likely to select a partisan label. As the marginal effect approaches 0, this indicates less sorting. Finally, the solid line represents the median of the marginal effect; the darker shaded area represents a 50% confidence interval, and the lighter region a 95% confidence interval.

Among those who score lower on self-monitoring, ideologues are far more likely to sort into a partisan category. For instance, consider the solid line in Figure 3. Conservatives are far more likely than liberals to identify as Republican (AME = 0.84, 95% CI = 0.77, 0.90). We estimate a 0.85 probability that a conservative low self-monitor identifies as Republican, and a 0.01 probability a liberal identifies as Republican. Conversely (again when self-monitoring is at its minimum), liberals are also far more likely to identify as Democrat (dotted-dashed line: AME = -0.86 , 95% CI = -0.91 , -0.77). Indeed, liberals are far more likely to identify as Democratic relative to conservatives. Finally, we do not find a discernable impact of ideology on the propensity to identify as a pure Independent, which is not altogether surprising given the polarized nature of the American political parties.

According to our expectations, the effect of ideology should diminish as self-monitoring increases. If high self-monitors are less likely to rely on their ideological predisposition, it follows that the correspondence between ideology and partisan choice should shrink—that is, the marginal effect of ideology should lessen as self-monitoring increases. Indeed, Figure 3 demonstrates this trend. While ideology continues to exert an effect on partisan choice among high self-monitors, the marginal effect is smaller. The marginal effect of identifying as a Republican, for instance, is over 30 percentage points smaller than what was observed for low self-monitors (AME = 0.53, 95% CI = 0.27, 0.74). The substantive result is largely the same in terms of identifying as a Democrat, with low self-monitors being more likely to rely on their ideological predispositions (AME = -0.49 , 95% CI = -0.71 , -0.19).

These results indicate that *partisan-ideological* sorting—that is, the alignment between one's ideology and partisan identification—is more pronounced among those who show less concern with amending their attitudes and behaviors to conform with social norms. The effect of ideology on party identification is substantial at minimum levels of self-monitoring. This is consistent with the literature showing that self-monitors are less susceptible to social influence and are more likely to rely on their internal states. Liberals are more likely to identify as Democrats, and conservatives are more likely to identify as Republicans. It is important to note our results do not imply that high self-monitors are entirely absent of ideological reasoning (Converse, 1964; Jost, 2006). The marginal effect of ideology at high self-monitoring remains statistically significant, though the effects are considerably smaller in magnitude. High self-monitors are simply less likely to express their ideological preferences as partisan identities.

Voting. Our results demonstrate that individuals express ideology to varying degrees, depending upon their own psychological penchant for relying on internal traits. As an additional test of whether self-monitoring reduces the impact of ideology in political decision-making, we estimated the impact of ideology on vote choice (across levels of self-monitoring). The left-most entries in Table 2

⁶We simulate uncertainty in the postestimation model predictions by drawing 1,000 values from a multivariate normal distribution, using the estimated parameters and variance matrix of parameters. Throughout this article, the darker shaded area represents a 50% confidence interval and the lighter region a 95% confidence interval. We fix self-monitoring, ideology, and self-monitoring \times ideology at different values, while using observed covariate scores for the remaining variables; hence, an "average marginal effect."

Table 2. Vote Choice

	Voting		Party Polarization		Candidate Polarization	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
Self-Monitoring	1.96	0.58	0.22	1.32	0.19	0.10
Ideology	7.74	0.81	1.03	0.89	1.02	0.07
SM × Ideology	-4.46	1.92	-0.65	0.17	-0.58	0.17
Catholic	-0.22	0.20	-0.01	0.02	-0.01	0.02
No Religion	-0.36	0.23	-0.05	0.03	-0.08	0.03
Other Religion	-1.23	1.48	0.05	0.08	0.04	0.08
Female	-0.14	0.17	-0.04	0.02	-0.06	0.02
College	0.21	0.18	0.04	0.02	0.01	0.02
Nonwhite	-3.47	0.27	-0.29	0.02	-0.34	0.02
Age	-0.00	0.01	-0.00	0.00	-0.00	0.00
Intercept	-3.80	0.58	-0.47	0.06	-0.50	0.06
<i>N</i>	1200		1516		1527	

Note. Voting is scored as voting for John McCain or Barack Obama. Party polarization is Feelings towards Republicans-Feeling towards Democrats; Candidate Polarization is Feelings towards McCain-Feeling towards Obama. Vote model is a logistic regression. Party and Candidate Polarization are ordinary least squares estimates. Bold entries indicate estimate is two times the standard error.

show the logistic regression results of a reported vote for John McCain versus Barack Obama, conditional on ideology, self-monitoring, the interaction between the two, and the identical covariates used in our previous model.

Again, we find that ideology is strongly related to the dependent variable—here, reported voting—but this effect is substantially reduced as self-monitoring increases. There exists a large effect of ideology on voting at minimum levels of self-monitoring ($b = 7.74$, $SE = 0.81$). Indeed, the probability that a low self-monitoring conservative reports voting for McCain is 0.85; the probability of voting for McCain among low self-monitoring liberals is 0.01. However, self-monitoring moderates the expression of ideological preference ($b = -4.46$, $SE = 1.92$). We estimate that high self-monitoring conservatives vote for McCain with a 0.57 probability, whereas high self-monitoring liberals do so with a probability of 0.08. Once again, while we find that liberals and conservatives deviate with respect to whom they vote, the ideological gap shrinks as self-monitoring increases.

Figure 4 largely echoes what we observe with respect to party identification. At the sample minimum levels of self-monitoring, there is a relatively robust marginal effect of ideology (AME = 0.84, 95% CI = 0.75, 0.91). At maximum levels of self-monitoring, the marginal effect decreases (AME = 0.48 (95% CI = 0.12, 0.69)).⁷

Affective polarization. Finally, we examine the relationship between ideology and general evaluations of the candidates and parties. We estimated a similar set of models. Table 2 presents OLS regression models in which we subtract feelings towards Republicans from feelings towards Democrats. We regressed this measure on the same variables in our previous models. The second set of results displays the regression model where feelings towards McCain minus feelings towards Obama are the dependent variables. Prior to differencing the variables, we rescaled each feeling thermometer to vary from 0 to 1, with high scores denoting greater positive affect. Echoing our previous findings, we calculate the marginal effects of ideology across the full range of self-monitoring

⁷Hainmueller, Mummolo, and Xu (forthcoming) detail the issues involved with interpreting linear interaction terms—among others, the interaction may be non-linear and there may be insufficient statistical support across the full range of the moderating covariate. We estimated this voting model using their “interflex” package in R and generally reproduce the marginal effect in Figure 3.

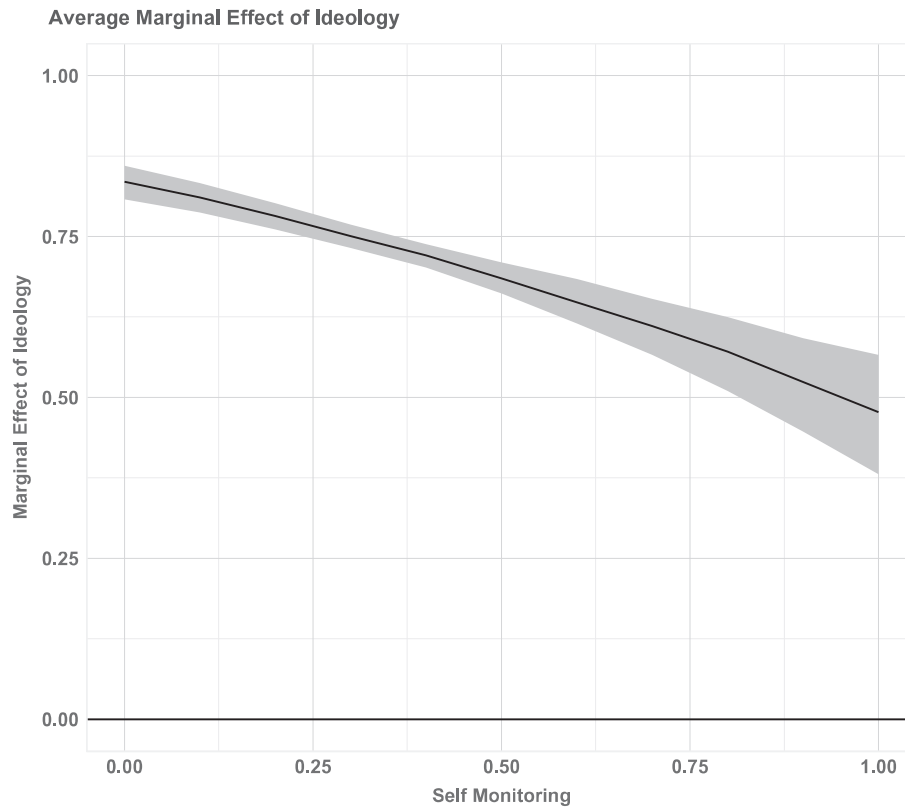


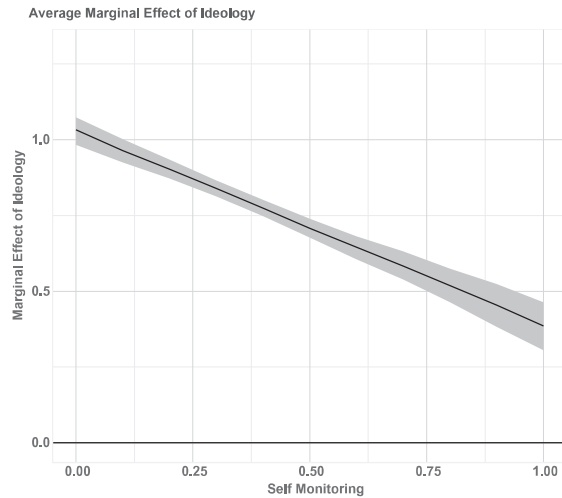
Figure 4. Voting. Self-monitoring and sorting. Estimates represent the average marginal effect of ideology across levels of self-monitoring.

scores. For both affective partisan polarization and affective candidate polarization, we observe a much stronger relationship between ideology and polarization at low levels of self-monitoring (Figure 5).

These findings are particularly telling in terms of how ideological belief translates to partisan identification, voting, and partisan affect. Two central findings emerge from our analyses. First, the relationship between party identification and ideology is conditioned by an individual-level, psychological trait known as self-monitoring. Relative to high self-monitors, low self-monitors demonstrate a stronger relationship between both ideology and party identification. This does not imply that high self-monitors lack ideological reasoning in their political calculus. On the contrary, our results do suggest that high self-monitors rely on ideology, yet the extent to which ideology colors partisan judgment is significantly less than that of their low self-monitoring counterparts. Second, we find that low self-monitors are more inclined to rely on ideological predispositions when formulating a vote choice and evaluating the parties and candidates.

Individuals who rely primarily on their internal traits to guide their actions, we have argued, tend to base their partisan expression on their ideological values. Conservatives choose the Republican Party, while liberals choose the Democrats. This raises the question of why high self-monitors rely less heavily on ideology. We suspect that the answer relates to the individual's social surroundings. Individuals who are high self-monitors should be highly attuned to their social settings by conditioning their preferences on their unique social surroundings.

Party Affective Polarization



Candidate Affective Polarization

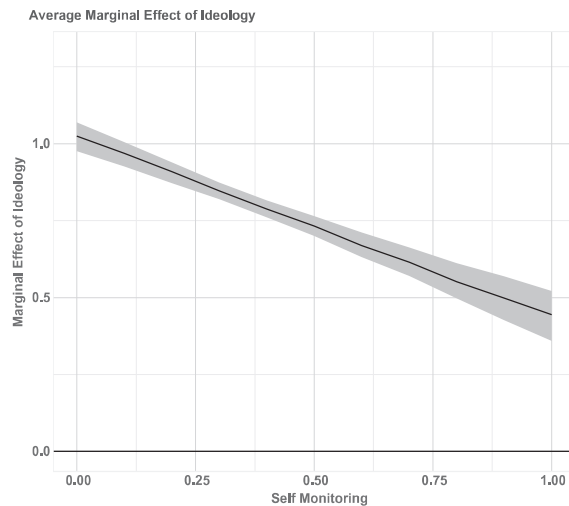


Figure 5. Affective polarization, ideology and self-monitoring. Estimates represent the average marginal effect of ideology across levels of self-monitoring. The top figure represents party based polarization (i.e., Feelings toward Republicans–Feelings toward Democrats); the bottom figure represents candidate based polarization (i.e., Feelings toward McCain–Feelings toward Obama).

Partisan-Social Sorting Among High Self-Monitors

To explore this possibility, we rely on an experimental study to help us determine how the influence of social settings on political attitudes varies by self-monitoring. Klar (2014) collected data to examine the extent to which the partisan composition of social groups shapes group members' policy attitudes. However, she does not examine the extent to which self-monitoring moderates these tendencies, which is what we explore here. A sample of undergraduate students at a large Midwestern

university participated in this study as part of a course requirement. Students first completed an online survey, including questions about their party identification and basic demographics, as well as an abbreviated self-monitoring scale consisting of the following five true or false statements: “I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations”; “Even if I am not enjoying myself, I often pretend to be having a good time”; “In groups of people, I am rarely the center of attention”; “I would probably make a good actor”; and “I may deceive people by being friendly when I really dislike them.” Unlike the ANES analysis, the response scale consisted of “True” and “False.” We recoded the items so that a 1 always indicates self-monitoring, and we averaged them to come up with a composite self-monitoring scale. The reliability was somewhat low for self-monitoring ($\alpha = 0.30$), due in part to the fact these items tend to straddle the three dimensions outlined above. The internal consistency of these items is lower likely because the items are true/false, rather than asked on a graded scale.

After completing the initial survey, participants attended a study session at the research lab several weeks later. Unbeknownst to the participants, each individual was randomly assigned to attend their study session with a group of subject that was entirely composed of Democrats (“homogeneous condition”), was composed of four Democrats and four Republicans (“heterogeneous condition”), or was composed of an arbitrary partisan mix without any concern for members’ political affiliations (“no group condition”).

When the participants arrived at the lab for their assigned time-slot, the researcher first instructed all respondents to sit at individual computer terminals. On their computer screens, they each read about Democratic and Republican proposals regarding energy policy. The researcher then asked that participants in the “homogeneous group” and “heterogeneous group” conditions sit together to discuss the issue. Respondents had five minutes to share with one another their preferred policy solution, be it the Democratic or Republican alternative. Respondents in the “no group” condition did not participate in this portion of the study.

Once discussions were complete, the researcher instructed all respondents to complete a survey at their private computer terminal where they indicated their own preferred policy proposal. They answered the following question: “When it comes to energy policy, how do you think the government should prioritize its efforts? Should they prioritize drilling for oil? Or prioritize alternative fuels?” Response options were provided on a 7-point scale where 1 indicated “only prioritize drilling for oil,” 7 indicated “only prioritize alternative fuels,” and the midpoint (3) was labeled “equally prioritize both drilling for oil and alternative fuels.” Incidentally, no respondents chose the “only prioritize drilling for oil item,” which leaves us with a six-category dependent variable ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 1.39$).

Because all homogeneous groups were composed of Democrats, we can only analyze the Democrats’ responses. There were simply not enough Republican respondents in this sample to construct a homogenous Republican group. Reproducing Klar’s (2014) finding, there are significant differences between treatment conditions ($F[2, 348] = 56.61$, $p < 0.01$), with the homogenous group participation leading to the most ideologically liberal positions ($M = 5.67$, $SD = 0.89$), followed by the control condition ($M = 5.11$, $SD = 1.25$), and then heterogeneous condition, which caused respondents to express the most conservative viewpoints ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.46$). The homogenous condition offered a more liberal response relative to the control group ($t = 3.42$, $p < 0.01$), and the heterogeneous group offered a more conservative response relative to the control group ($t = -6.47$, $p < 0.01$).

Klar (2014) did not examine the role of self-monitoring in this process. Given that this dataset includes self-monitoring, we examine whether, in line with our hypotheses, the influence of the social setting was indeed more powerful among high self-monitors than among those who score low on the trait. We estimate a simple model in which we regress the energy policy preference variable on indicators corresponding to whether one is in the homogenous group versus the control condition and whether one is in the heterogeneous condition, relative to the control. Thus, we are comparing the effect of being in a like-minded group, to being in no group, as well as comparing the effect

of a mixed group, relative to no group. Then we can interact these indicators with self-monitoring, which allows us to examine if this covariate accounts for heterogeneity across treatment condition. It is important to note that group composition was randomly assigned, but self-monitoring was not. Finally, because our dependent variable only consists of six categories, we estimated an ordered logit regression model.

Table 3 displays the results in this experiment. When self-monitoring is at its minimum value, heterogeneous composition leads to a relatively more conservative position, relative to the no-group, control condition ($b = -1.69$, $SE = 0.68$). As self-monitoring increases, this doesn't significantly change this treatment effect, as indicated by the nonsignificant *Self Monitoring* \times *Heterogeneous* interaction ($b = 0.41$, $SE = 1.03$). On the other hand, the effect of the homogenous composition variable varies across levels of self-monitoring. When self-monitoring is at its minimum, there is no difference between the control group and the heterogeneous group ($b = -0.43$, $SE = 0.69$). However, as self-monitoring increases, so too do the consequences of being in a homogenous group ($b = 2.12$, $SE = 1.05$).

To further clarify these effects, we generated the probability of being in the two most liberal categories for the dependent variable at high and low self-monitoring across treatment conditions. We are thus predicting the probability of being in the "Mostly Prioritize Alternative Fuels" or "Only Prioritize Alternative Fuels" categories. We display these predictions in Figure 6.

Among high self-monitors, in the homogenous condition, we estimate a 0.85 probability of scoring in the two most liberal categories. In the heterogeneous condition, we estimate a probability of 0.23. In the control, the probability is 0.52. The differences are less pronounced among low self-monitors, suggesting that low self-monitors are less responsive to the heterogeneity of their discussion group.

Finally, we display the conditional treatment effects across levels of self-monitoring. It is quite clear that the heterogeneous group leads to a more conservative response, regardless of a respondent's self-monitoring score. However, we only observe the heterogeneous group effects as self-monitoring increases. Indeed, we observe a nonsignificant treatment effects at low levels of self-monitoring, suggesting that low self-monitors are relatively impervious to whether their group consists of like-minded students.

The results suggest that the psychological trait of self-monitoring is an important factor in determining for whom social setting influences preference. Recall that we are only analyzing responses among Democrats (due to limitations in the data). The interaction between like-minded settings and

Table 3. Energy Policy Preferences

	Energy Policy	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
Self-Monitoring	-0.05	0.76
Heterogeneous Condition	-1.69	0.68
Homogenous Condition	-0.43	0.69
Heterogeneous x Self-Monitoring	0.41	1.03
Heterogeneous x Self-Monitoring	2.12	1.05
Threshold 1	-3.06	
Threshold 2	-1.87	
Threshold 3	-1.05	
Threshold 4	-0.13	
Threshold 5	3.12	
<i>N</i>	351	

Note. Ordered logistic regression results. The excluded category is the "no group"/control condition. Entries are point estimates and standard errors in parentheses. Bold entries indicate estimate is two times the standard error.

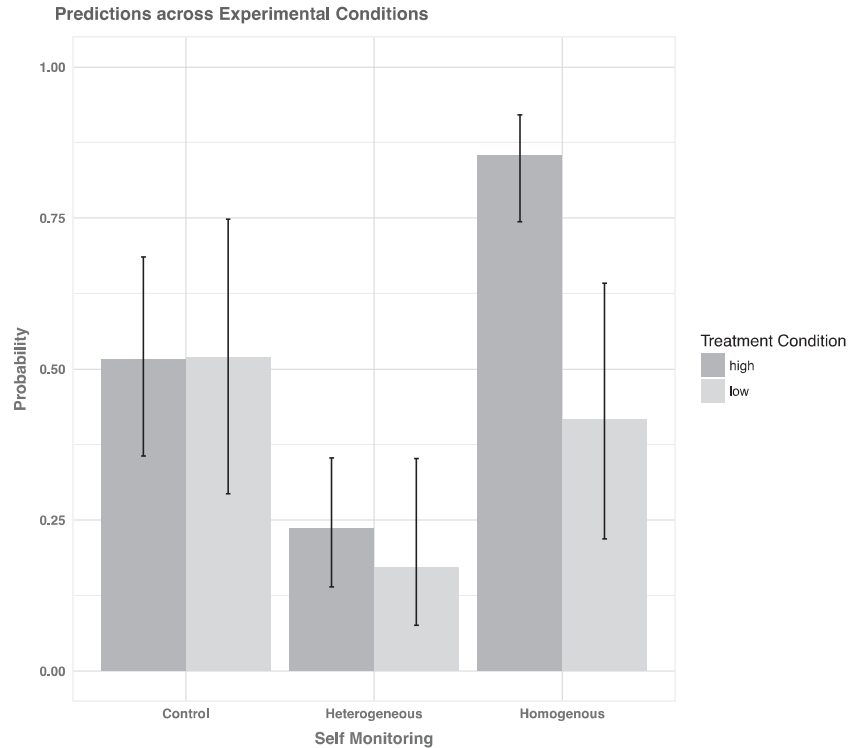


Figure 6. Self-monitoring and energy policy preferences. Predictions are from the ordered logistic regression in Table 3. Predictions are at minimum and maximum levels of self-monitoring, across the three treatment conditions. Probabilities represent the cumulative probabilities of being in the two most liberal categories of the dependent variable, “mostly” or “only” “prioritize alternative energy.” Ninety-five percent confidence bands surround the estimates.

self-monitoring indicates that as Democratic individuals become higher in self-monitoring (and, thus, more attuned to the influences of their social settings), like-minded group settings are more likely to lead them to prefer the Democratic Party’s policy proposal over that of the Republican Party.

Self-Monitoring and Partisan-Social Sorting

These results suggest two mechanisms at work. On one hand, low self-monitors are far more likely to rely on their ideological preferences when formulating a party attachment; they are more likely to engage in *partisan-ideological sorting*. The experimental data suggest that high, but not low, self-monitors are much more likely to respond to their social environments. High self-monitors are more likely to express attitudinally extreme positions when in the company of like-minded individuals. Heterogeneity, on the other hand, reduces extreme positions. That high self-monitors respond to social heterogeneity is important; it is also consistent with the literature suggesting high self-monitors are more responsive to normative social pressures. However, the experimental data presented above does not allow us to determine whether high self-monitors prefer socially homogenous settings. *Do high self-monitors voluntarily manufacture—or at the very least, prefer to manufacture—their social environment in accordance with their political beliefs?* We suspect that because high self-monitors are generally more sensitive to their environments, they should also tend to prefer homogenous social interactions, as these interactions are likely defined by significantly less partisan conflict. In short, *high self-monitoring partisans should prefer to interact with like-minded partisans.*

To address this possibility, we contracted with the 2016 Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project (CCAP), hosted by YouGov, to collect a representative cross-section of U.S. adults. One thousand adults completed the CCAP survey, which was in the field from October 28, 2016 through November 6, 2016. As with the 2008 ANES, self-monitoring was assessed with three questions (“How good or bad of an actor would you be?”; “When you’re in a group of people, how often are you the center of attention?”; and “When you’re with other people, how often do you put on a show to impress or entertain them?”). The items again scaled together reasonably ($\alpha = 0.68$). We averaged the three items and recoded them to vary from 0 to 1, with high scores indicating greater self-monitoring.

To examine how self-monitoring may affect preferences for particular social encounters, we rely on several indicators of social distance (Bogardus, 1947). We measured distance in three ways: (1) marital preference, (2) neighborhood preference, and (3) friendship networks. We measured marital preferences with the following prompt: “Suppose a member of your immediate family was getting married. How would you feel if he or she married a (Democrat or Republican). Would you be unhappy, happy, or would it make no difference?”⁸ We measured neighborhood preferences with the prompt: “Suppose a new neighbor were moving in next door. How would you feel if that next-door neighbor was a (Democrat or Republican)? Would you be unhappy, happy, or would it make no difference?” We measured friendship preference with a single item: “Please think carefully about the people you typically spend time with. Are these people mostly Republican, mostly Democrat, or somewhere in between?”

Partisan marriage. Do high self-monitors prefer marital arrangements that lessen partisan disagreement? To explore this, we regressed marital preferences on self-monitoring, party identification, and a series of control variables. While high self-monitors are slightly happier when a family member marries a Democrat ($b = -0.291$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < 0.01$), there is no effect of self-monitoring on preference for Republican marriage.

However, because there is a clear partisan target for these questions, we reestimated these models with an interaction specified between *Democratic Respondent* \times *Self-Monitoring* and *Independent Respondent* \times *Self-Monitoring*. To identify the equation, we declared Republican identifiers to be the baseline condition. Figure 7 displays these results.

At minimum levels of self-monitoring, Democratic respondents tend to be happier if a family member marries a Democrat ($b = -2.41$, $SE = 0.30$) than if a family member marries a Republican ($b = 2.23$, $SE = 0.27$). Thus, even low self-monitors prefer some degree of partisan homogeneity. Yet, this effect is largely conditional on levels of self-monitoring, as indicated by the marginally significant coefficient associated with *Self-Monitoring* \times *Democrat* for both Republican and Democratic marriage. The difference in marriage preference contrasting Republicans and Democrats increases as self-monitoring increases. High self-monitors are *more likely to prefer a family member to marry a fellow partisan*.

To further clarify these effects, Figure 8 displays we generate the probabilities of “unhappiness” and “happiness” regarding marriage to a Republican or Democrat, among self-identified Republicans and Democrats. We start by considering Republican identifiers. When a proposed spouse is a Republican, the probability a high-self monitoring Republican is happy is 0.43, relative to 0.27 for a low self-monitor; this effect does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance (AME = 0.16, 95% CI = -0.08, 0.40). The effect is largely parallel with respect to Republican preference for a Democratic spouse. The probability a high-self monitoring Republican is unhappy is 0.23, relative to 0.17 for a low self-monitor (AME = 0.05, 95% CI = -0.10, 0.28). In other words, while high self-monitoring Republicans are more likely to engineer their social settings by preferring like-minded marriage, this effect does not reach conventional levels of significance.

⁸We also asked this same question with other nonpartisan and partisan targets: African Americans, Atheists, Muslims, Independents, Political Activists, Democrats, and Republicans. Because our primary interests reside in partisan-social sorting, we only focus on Democrats and Republicans.

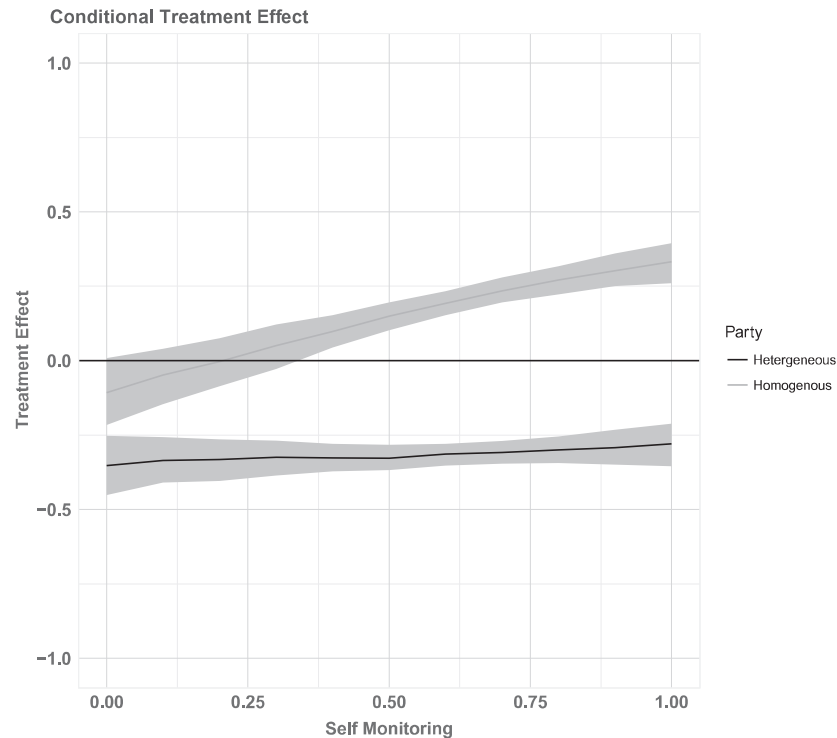


Figure 7. Conditional treatment effects across levels of self-monitoring. Predictions are from the ordered logistic regression in Table 3. Treatment effect is the effect of group composition relative to the control, no-group condition. Probabilities were derived from the cumulative probabilities of being in the two most liberal categories of the dependent variable, “mostly” or “only” “prioritize alternative energy.”

Self-monitoring is more pronounced among Democrats. When a proposed spouse is a Democrat and the respondent is Democratic, the probability a high-self monitor is happy is 0.59, relative to 0.17, for a low self-monitor (AME = 0.42, 95% CI = 0.24, 0.59). High self-monitoring Democrats are much more likely than their low self-monitoring counterparts to prefer marriage to a copartisan. Figure 8 also indicates that high self-monitoring Democrats are unhappy with the prospect of “out-party” marriage. Indeed, when a proposed spouse is a Republican, the probability a high-self monitor is unhappy is 0.26, relative to 0.14 for a low self-monitor (AME = 0.12, 95% CI = -0.02, 0.31). These findings illustrate an important—albeit unexpected—asymmetry: Self-monitoring tends to exert a stronger impact among Democrats than it does among Republicans. The marginal effect of self-monitoring on neighbor preference is greater among self-identified Democrats than it is for Republicans. It is unclear whether this asymmetry is unique to this particular measure of social distance—that is, marital preferences—or whether the effects of self-monitoring vary based on one’s partisan leanings.

Neighborhood Preference. To explore this possibility, we examine whether high self-monitors are more likely to prefer neighbors who are either Democrat or Republican. Here, we analyze two questions: “Suppose a new neighbor were moving in next door. How would you feel if that next-door neighbor was a (Democrat/Republican)? Would you be unhappy, happy, or would it make no difference?” Again, the response options vary from 1 (*Very Unhappy*) to 7 (*Very Happy*), and the item was recoded such that high scores indicate greater unhappiness. We generated the identical regression model described above, including the interaction specified between the partisan identity of the respondent and self-monitoring.

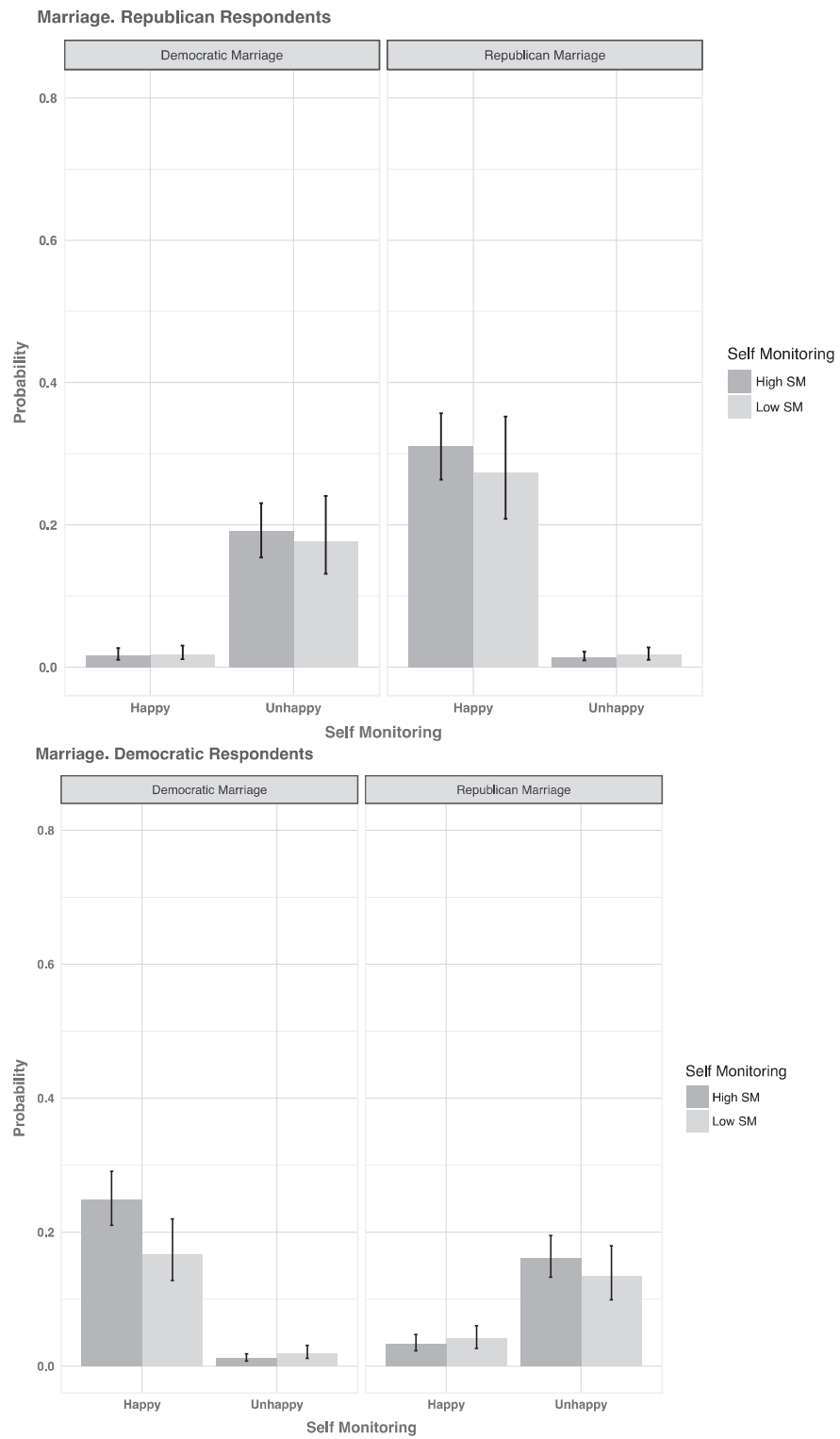


Figure 8. Political marriage. Top represents Republican respondents, bottom consists of Democrats. Probabilities are generated by averaging across respondent covariates.

Table 4 shows that among low self-monitors, Democrats and Republicans diverge with respect to neighbor preferences, with Democrats being more likely to prefer Democratic neighbors ($b = -2.58$, $SE = 0.34$), and Republicans generally being more likely to prefer Republican neighbors ($b = 2.29$, $SE = 0.31$). These differences are significantly greater among high self-monitors, as indicated by significant *Self-Monitoring x Democratic* interactions in both regression models. To clarify, Figure 9 presents the probabilities of unhappiness and happiness at sample minimum and maximum levels of self-monitoring, among Democratic and Republican identifiers.

Figure 9 displays we generate the probabilities of “unhappiness” and “happiness” with respect to living next to a Republican or Democrat, among self-identified Republicans and Democrats. The figure indicates that high self-monitors generally prefer to live alongside like-minded partisans; however, this effect is largely stratified by party identification. While high self-monitoring Republicans tend to prefer living next to a Republican, relative to their low self-monitoring counterparts, this effect does not reach conventional levels of significance ($AME = 0.20$, $95\% CI = -0.03, 0.46$). Likewise, when the neighbor is Democrat, high self-monitoring Republicans do report unhappiness, although this effect also is not statistically significant with respect to low self-monitoring Republicans ($AME = 0.06$, $95\% CI = -0.05, 0.26$).

On the other hand, among high self-monitoring Democrats, we do observe substantial preferences for like-minded interaction. When a proposed neighbor is a Democrat and the respondent is Democratic, the probability a high-self monitor being happy is 0.47, relative to 0.16 for a low self-monitor ($AME = 0.30$, $95\% CI = 0.11, 0.51$). When the proposed spouse is a Republican, high self-monitors express greater happiness ($AME = 0.11$, $95\% CI = 0.01, 0.27$). We observe the same asymmetry for neighbor preference as we did for marital preferences. Self-monitoring exerts a stronger effect among Democrats.

Table 4. Preference for Democratic/Republican Marriage, Conditional on Self-Monitoring and Its Interaction With Respondent Party Identification

	Republican Marriage		Democrat Marriage		Republican Neighbor		Democratic Neighbor	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Self-Monitoring	-0.69	0.55	0.36	0.59	-1.05	0.61	0.57	0.71
Democrat	2.23	0.27	-2.41	0.30	2.29	0.31	-2.58	0.34
Independent	1.15	0.39	-1.25	0.43	1.58	0.46	-1.16	0.50
SM x Democrat	1.53	0.73	-2.39	0.73	2.10	0.80	-2.12	0.85
SM x Independent	2.24	1.14	0.67	1.27	0.99	1.36	1.79	1.38
Catholic	0.15	0.19	-0.44	0.19	0.19	0.21	-0.21	0.22
No Religion	0.63	0.17	-0.60	0.18	0.75	0.19	-0.33	0.19
Other Religion	0.39	0.21	-0.33	0.22	0.48	0.23	-0.18	0.24
Female	-0.06	0.13	0.26	0.14	-0.02	0.14	0.12	0.15
College	0.13	0.14	0.05	0.15	0.18	0.15	-0.23	0.16
Non-White	-0.13	0.16	0.19	0.17	-0.23	0.18	0.28	0.18
Age	0.002	0.004	-0.002	0.004	0.003	0.004	-0.005	0.004
Threshold 1	-1.48		-4.99		-1.67		-5.38	
Threshold 2	-0.61		-4.31		-0.96		-4.68	
Threshold 3	-0.29		-3.93		-0.47		-4.13	
Threshold 4	3.64		0.56		4.36		1.19	
Threshold 5	4.50		1.31		5.35		2.04	
Threshold 6	5.25		2.14		6.03		2.53	
<i>N</i>	999		999		978		978	

Note. Estimates are ordered logistic regression estimates. The dependent variable is coded from 1 (*Happy*) to 7 (*Unhappy*). Entries in bold indicate a coefficient that is two times the size of its associated standard error.

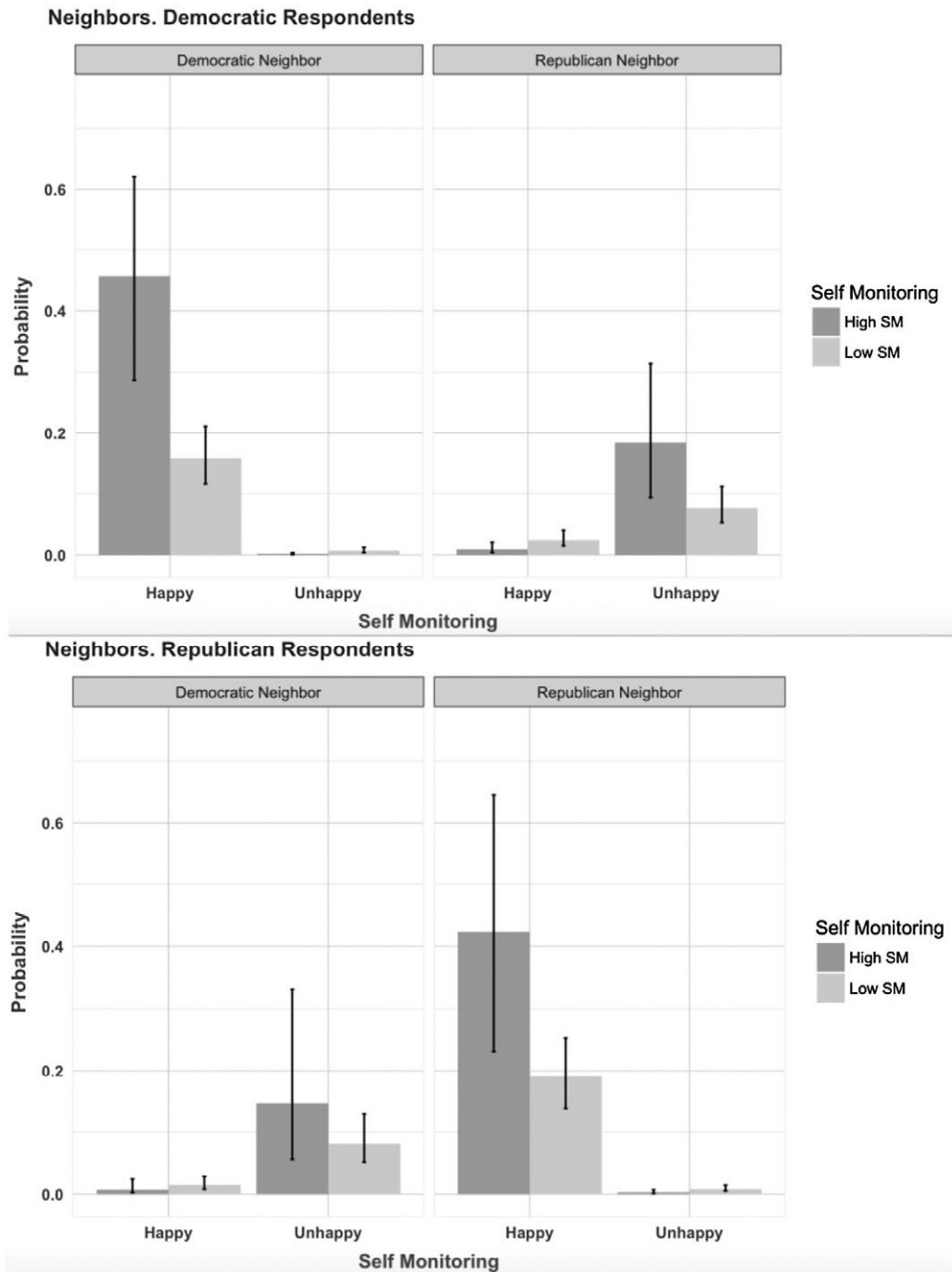


Figure 9. Neighbor preference. Top represents Democratic respondents, bottom consists of Republicans. Probabilities are generated by averaging across respondent covariates.

Reported Friendship. As a final test of whether high self-monitors prefer socially homogenous environments, and whether this effect is more pronounced among Democrats, we examine responses to the question, “Please think carefully about the people you typically spend time with. Are these

people mostly Republican, mostly Democrat, or somewhere in between?” Figure 10 displays the probability of reporting Democratic or Republican friends, at high and low self-monitoring, among self-identified Democrats and Republicans. Once again, the effect is much larger among Democrats than Republicans. Among Democrats, the probability of reporting Democratic friends is greater among high self-monitors relative to low self-monitors (AME = 0.35, 95% CI = 0.18, 0.51). Likewise, high self-monitoring Democrats are more likely than low self-monitoring Democrats to report fewer Republican friends (AME = -0.09, 95% CI = -0.14, -0.05). We do not observe statistically significant difference between high and low self-monitoring Republicans.

These data suggest that self-monitoring tends individuals toward a preference for a political homogeneous social environment; this effect is particularly pronounced among Democrats. It is particularly noteworthy given that self-monitoring is tied to socially desirable responding and a general preference for *more* not *less* social diversity. Indeed, when asked about ethnic, racial, or religious minorities, higher self-monitors (always careful to respect social norms) tend to prefer diversity. Yet, in an age in which polarization, sorting, and partisan prejudice is increasingly common, high self-monitors tend to actively avoid partisan diversity.

Asymmetric Effects and Statistical Power

The unexpected partisan asymmetry with respect to self-monitoring and its effects on social distance may be a consequence of several factors. Our inability to reject the null hypothesis that self-monitoring leads to distance among Republicans could be a genuine null effect—that is, self-monitoring is unrelated to distance—or it could be an artifact of insufficient statistical power. Indeed, the CCAP data is relatively underpowered with respect to documenting an effect among Republicans. Relative to Democrats, Republicans score lower on the self-monitoring scale (\underline{M} (Democrats) = 0.28, \underline{M} (Republicans) = 0.23, $t = 2.89$, $p < 0.01$). Of the $n = 482$ Democrats in the sample, $n = 49$ (10%) score above the midpoint of the self-monitoring scale. Yet of the $n = 377$ Republicans, $n = 21$ (6%) score above the midpoint. We may simply have insufficient numbers of Republican high self-monitors to observe a statistically significant effect. A power analysis indicated that, considering the effect sizes in our data, we would need over three times as many Republicans to observe a statistically significant effect.⁹

Discussion

Despite near-incessant calls for compromise and bipartisanship among both Americans and their represented electives, sorting is very much part and parcel of contemporary American politics. While calls for political compromise and civility are necessary to ease what seems to be intractable political gridlock (Klar & Krupnikov, 2016) the Democratic and Republican Parties in the American twenty-first century are more ideologically distant and ideologically cohesive than through much of recent history. With little ideological common ground, it is perhaps no wonder that the parties rarely see eye to eye on contemporary policy debates. In the mass public, this has contributed to disdain

⁹The social distance items generally scale together. We constructed an averaged measure of social distance to Democrats by averaging marital preference, neighbor preference, and reported neighbor composition ($\alpha = 0.72$). We first z-standardized every measure and then averaged. We similarly constructed an averaged measure of social distance to Republicans by averaging marital preference, neighbor preference, and reported neighbor composition ($\alpha = 0.77$). We also z-standardized every item and then averaged. The correlation between these scales was substantial ($r = -0.68$). Because the same items were in both scales—neighbor composition—we also calculated the correlation between scales excluding this item ($r = -0.44$). From this, we calculated the correlation coefficient for self-monitoring and distance separately for Democrats and Republicans. From this, we calculated the number of respondents necessary to find a statistically significant effect at the 0.05 level, assuming power of 0.8. Our estimates indicate we would need $n = 1,260$ Republicans to document a significant effect for self-monitoring and preference for the Democratic Party, and in excess of 6,000 respondents to find a significant effect for self-monitoring and preferences for the Republican Party.

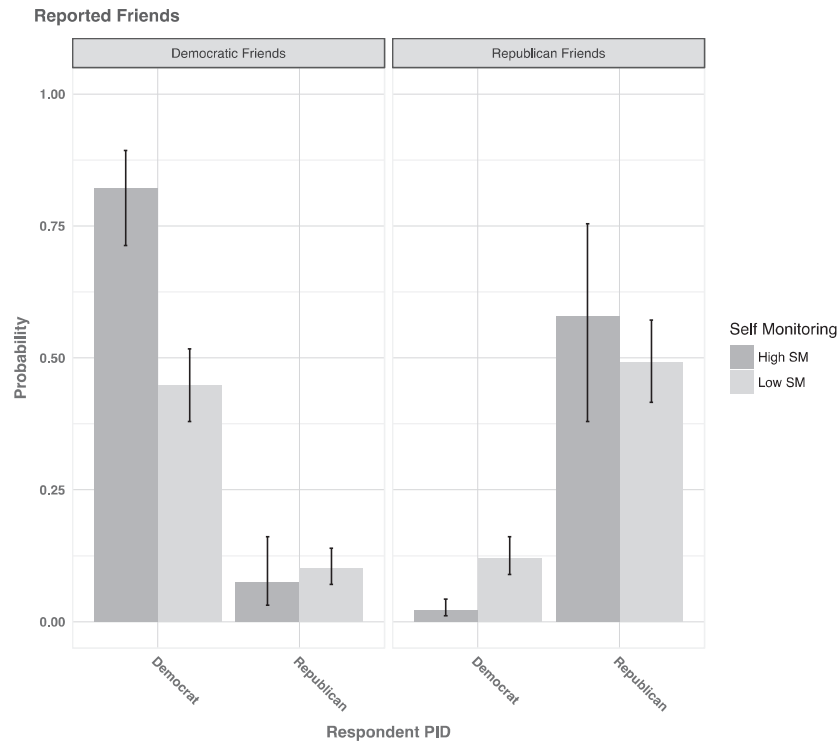


Figure 10. Reported friendships by neighbor preference, partisan self-identification, and self-monitoring.

for members of the out-party (Iyengar et al., 2012) and partisan-motivated prejudice (Mason, 2018; although for limits of prejudice, see Lelkes & Westwood, 2017).

The findings presented in this article detail how partisan-ideological sorting and partisan-social sorting are distinct phenomena driven by unique psychological traits. With the rise of ideological polarization emerging in the 1990s, it is perhaps not surprising that respondents across our datasets are generally ideological in nature. For instance, in the 2008 ANES, we find that ideology exerts a powerful impact on party identification, voting, and affective evaluations of the political candidates and parties. Yet the extent to which respondents rely on their ideology is largely conditioned by self-monitoring. In particular, low self-monitors—by placing a higher premium on attitudes that serve a value expressive function—are more likely to rely on their ideology. This is not to suggest that high self-monitors are nonideological. On the contrary. Our subsequent analyses show that they are simply much more attuned to the ideological and partisan composition of their social networks. We demonstrate that high self-monitors are more likely to adopt a policy position when in the presence of like-minded acquaintances. Moreover, high self-monitors prefer social environments that reinforce, rather than challenge, existing political beliefs.

These results shed light on the psychological foundations guiding two very different forms of sorting: social and ideological. High self-monitors are more likely to show signs of social sorting; low self-monitors are more likely to sort ideologically. While social and ideological sorting processes are distinct, the outcome of both types of sorting are equally ominous for bipartisan cooperation. Furthermore, both types of sorting appear to be mutually reinforcing: partisan-ideological sorting can lead to affective polarization (Mason, 2013) just as social-ideological sorting can encourage ideological homogeneity (Sinclair, 2012). Sorting is not simply a matter of fact in contemporary politics but indeed indicates a virulent transmission of political gridlock throughout the mass public.

The studies we present here collectively illustrate how the tendency to sort ideologically is driven by psychological factors that are distinct, and perhaps even opposite, from those that drive Americans to sort socially. Across two representative samples and an experiment, we find persistent evidence that individuals who rely on internal traits to guide behaviors and attitudes similarly rely on their own ideological predispositions when forming their vote intentions, their political evaluations, and their partisan identity itself. Among those for whom social influence is more influential, social settings appear to dictate political attitudes and behaviors.

While our results point to unique psychological foundations for ideological and social sorting, which are broadly consistent with our theoretical expectations, we also find asymmetric results. Democratic self-monitors are more likely to display behavior consistent with our expectations, relative to Republican self-monitors. At this juncture, we can only speculate as to why this might be, but we note significant differences in Republicans' tendencies to self-monitor. Individuals who identify as Republicans are significantly less likely to be high in self-monitoring, as compared with Democrats. The low number of high self-monitoring Republicans that are included in our samples seems a likely reason for the large confidence intervals that stand in the way of significant findings among this subgroup. Our data and statistical models are underpowered with respect to finding a statistically significant effect of self-monitoring and social sorting among Republicans, certainly because of low levels of reported self-monitoring among Republicans. The fact that Republicans are lower in self-monitoring than Democrats is in and of itself noteworthy and merits consideration in future work.

In sum, we have examined a unique characteristic in contemporary partisan politics, that of the tendency of voters to select political parties, social settings, and information environments based on ideological or otherwise political reasons. We demonstrate that individuals' own psychological dispositions help to determine their political attitudes and behaviors. Specifically, only those who are more likely to base their actions on social settings will sort according to their environments; others will sort in line with their ideological traits. While we focus on partisan politics within the United States, our findings are perhaps applicable to other electoral contexts. Our reliance on *self-monitoring* indeed affords us a greater understanding of the psychological dynamics involved in sorting among any citizenry, and we hope this work stimulates similar studies in diverse settings. Western democracy has arguably reached an inflection point, one in which parties are becoming increasingly distinct from one another, defined by greater ideological consistency; in many contexts, a rise of populist sentiment is ushering in partisan realignment. The historic Brexit vote, the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States, the 2017 French election, the 2018 Italian election, and the general appeal of authoritarian-oriented political parties across the globe, exemplify a departure from "establishment politics." These factors have led to a recalibration of what and whom the two major parties represent. It is paramount more now than ever before to understand how and why psychological predispositions condition responses to these turbulent times.

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Supporting Information

Additional supporting information may be found in the online version of this article at the publisher's web site:

Table S1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model

Table S2. Multiple Indicator Multiple Cause Structural Equation Model