

Causes and Consequences of Affective Polarisation in Comparative Perspective

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Als meus pares, al meu germà i als meus nebots

I a la Cristina, per aquests anys

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ABSTRACT

This PhD dissertation adds to the literature that studies affective polarisation in comparative perspective. Citizens of democracies around the globe express substantive levels of hostility towards opposing parties, their leaders and supporters. Citizens tend to hold more polarised sentiments towards parties than towards voters, but we do not know much about what determines the differences between both measures. In a chapter of this dissertation, I explore how ideological distance and social sorting account for the gap between the polarisation of feelings about parties and voters in Spain. There is some evidence in the literature that hostility between partisans is related to the rise of radical right parties. Another chapter of this dissertation contributes by clarifying this relationship by, first, developing a theoretical framework of the affective roots and consequences of the electoral emergence of radical right parties and, second, testing it for the case of the radical right party VOX in Spain. Party leaders have gained centrality in most parliamentary and multiparty systems, but the literature analysing leader affective polarisation and comparing it with party affective polarisation is scarce, especially outside the United States. A last chapter explores, in Western Europe, the impact of parties' electoral wins and losses on the affective polarisation of the leader vis-à-vis the party.

RESUM

La present tesi doctoral realitza una contribució original als estudis comparats sobre polarització afectiva. Els ciutadans de democràcies d'arreu del món expressen nivells importants d'hostilitat cap al partits contraris, els seus líders i votants. La ciutadania tendeix a tenir sentiments més polaritzats cap als partits que cap als votants, però el coneixement sobre quins factors determinen les diferències entre els dos tipus d'afecte encara és escàs. En un capítol d'aquesta tesi, exploro com la distància ideològica i la classificació social expliquen la bretxa entre la polarització dels sentiments cap als partits i cap als votants a Espanya. La literatura presenta algunes evidències que la hostilitat entre partidaris està relacionada amb l'ascens dels partits de dreta radical. Un

altre capítol de la tesis clarifica aquesta relació desenvolupant, primer, un marc teòric sobre els orígens i les conseqüències afectives de la irrupció electoral dels partits de dreta radical i, en segon lloc, testant aquest marc en el cas del partit de dreta radical VOX a Espanya. Els líders dels partits han guanyat centralitat en molts sistemes parlamentaris i multi-partidistes, però la literatura que analitza la polarització afectiva del líder i la compara amb la polarització afectiva del partit és escassa, especialment fora dels Estats Units. El darrer capítol de la tesi explora, a Europa occidental, l'impacte dels guanys i pèrdues electorals dels partits sobre la polarització afectiva del líder en relació a la del partit.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Political polarisation traditionally refers to the extent to which the mass public disagree on policy issues or ideological positions along the left–right dimension. This concept may also refer to the ideological and policy disagreement among parties and political elites. However, there is a growing attention both in academia and outside academia towards an alternative view of polarisation that is rooted in dislike and resentment between partisans, which is commonly labelled *affective polarisation* (Iyengar et al. 2012; Iyengar and Westwood 2015). Ideological and affective polarisation are two distinct aspects of polarisation: the correlation between both is far from perfect, so that an increase in inter-partisan hostilities may not be reflected in higher levels of ideological disagreements among citizens or elites (e.g. Mason 2015; Reiljan 2020). Although certain levels of affective polarisation are probably rooted in deep human psychological functions, the strengthening of partisan hostility is linked to disturbing and growing social and political conflicts (e.g. Mason 2018). While some levels of ideological discrepancies appear to be necessary for a well-functioning democracy, affective polarisation may lead to anti-deliberative attitudes, social avoidance and discrimination, dehumanisation of partisans from opposing parties, political instability and, in the most extreme cases, support for partisan violence and democratic backsliding (e.g. Kalmoe and Mason 2019; Martherus et al. 2021; McCoy et al. 2018; Strickler 2018).

This phenomenon has been extensively studied in the United States (U.S.) (Iyengar et al. 2019). The clear upward trend that Americans have experienced in terms of affective polarisation during the most recent decades has mainly been driven by an increase in out-party animus (Iyengar et al. 2012). Some scholars argue that partisan identities, and the progressive convergence of other salient social and ideological identities with partisanship (that is, social sorting), have been the main drivers of this rise in affective polarisation (e.g. Huddy et al. 2015; Klein 2020; Mason 2018). On the other hand, some others (e.g. Rogowski and Sutherland 2016; Webster and Abramowitz 2017) claim that elite ideological polarisation and ideological sorting are the main factors to be blamed for this polarisation. Further, factors such as mainstream media coverage of partisan polarisation (e.g. Levendusky and Malhotra 2016), access to broadband Internet and consumption of partisan and social media (e.g. Barberá 2020; Druckman et al. 2018) are

also explored as relevant drivers for the increasing antipathy between Democrats and Republicans, as are political campaigns and negative advertising (e.g. Sood and Iyengar 2016). Apart from the causes of affective polarisation, there is also an extensive literature on its political and non-political consequences for American society (e.g. Huber and Malhotra 2017; Iyengar and Krupenkin 2018; McConnell et al. 2018).

This PhD dissertation adds to the flourishing body of comparative literature that has begun to study affective polarisation outside the U.S. These studies have made a relevant contribution to the measurement and operationalisation of this phenomenon in multiparty contexts. They have empirically demonstrated that affective polarisation is a worldwide phenomenon and that the polarisation levels registered in the U.S. are not especially intense compared to other democracies, although the upward trend identified in the U.S. is not part of a general cross-national tendency (e.g. Boxell et al. 2021; Gidron et al. 2020; Reiljan 2020; Wagner 2021). Further, these studies have explored the association of affective polarisation with some of its well-known drivers, such as partisan identity, social sorting or ideological polarisation, and have indicated that national economic conditions and electoral institutions shape polarisation levels (e.g. Gidron et al. 2020; Harteveld 2021b). A comparative analysis has also been conducted of the consequences of inter-partisan antipathy (e.g. McCoy and Somer 2019; Ward and Tavits 2019). Despite these important findings, our understanding of affective polarisation in comparative terms is still quite limited.

In this dissertation, I make three main contributions to this burgeoning comparative literature. First, the dissertation explores some of the factors that explain when polarised feelings towards parties spread to ordinary voters. This study is relevant because, while polarisation of feelings about parties may have a positive facet (e.g. high political involvement), resentment between voters is more unequivocally related to pernicious consequences (e.g. McCoy and Somer 2019). This topic is also connected to a relevant measurement problem: while most comparative studies rely on thermometer feelings towards parties to measure affective polarisation, it is well-known that these measures tend to overestimate the degree to which people dislike supporters of the other parties (e.g. Harteveld 2021a; Kingzette 2021). Specifically, I provide evidence, for the case of Spain, of the degree to which ideological distance and social sorting predict when antipathy towards parties extends to rank-and-file supporters.

Second, whereas the literature has shown that the electoral emergence of radical right parties fuels ideological polarisation among voters (Bischof and Wagner 2019), evidence has also been presented that the rise of these parties is related to affective polarisation (e.g. Hartevelde et al. 2021; Helbling and Jungkunz 2020). However, does the electoral emergence of radical right parties fuel affective polarisation among the public, or rather does this type of polarisation precede the initial electoral success of the radical right? In this dissertation, Professor Mariano Torcal and I argue that the electoral emergence of the radical right is rooted in previous affective attitudes and that, in turn, its electoral rise fuels affective polarisation, although with different intensities and for different reasons that vary by the partisan group. Then, we test our expectations for the case of the VOX party in Spain.

Lastly, affective evaluations can be directed not only at parties and their supporters, but also at party leaders (Reijan et al. 2021). Affective polarisation concerning leaders, however, is a little-explored field outside the U.S. despite the increasing personalisation of politics in parliamentary and multiparty systems (e.g. Garzia et al. 2020). This dissertation explores leader affective polarisation vis-à-vis party affective polarisation in Western Europe. I show that parties' electoral wins and losses influence citizens' affective evaluations of leaders more than the assessments of parties, which tend to be more consistent over time. Therefore, the strength of leader affective polarisation varies compared to party affective polarisation as a function of parties' electoral performance.

The rest of the introduction is organised as follows. First, I define affective polarisation and describe the different operationalisations used in the literature and in this PhD dissertation. Second, the main causes and consequences of affective polarisation are explained synthetically, with particular emphasis on those aspects that are dealt with in the dissertation. Third, I detail the contribution of the dissertation to the comparative literature on affective polarisation. Fourth, I describe the data, case studies and type of methods employed. Finally, the structure of the dissertation is briefly presented.

1.1. Definition and Measurement of Affective Polarisation

Affective polarisation generally refers to the extent to which individuals feel a sense of sympathy towards supporters of their own party and antagonism towards partisans of

the other party or parties (Iyengar et al. 2012). I use this seminal definition of affective polarisation in the dissertation, although some other slightly different definitions have been provided in the literature. For example, some studies define this phenomenon strictly in terms of negative feelings towards opponents (e.g. Hartevelde 2021). In the U.S. literature, some scholars use the term ‘social polarisation’, which is defined as ‘an increasing social distance between Democrats and Republicans’ that is made up of three phenomena: increased partisan bias, emotional reactivity and activism (Mason 2018, p. 17). Beyond their differences, all the definitions share the presence of some feelings of animosity produced by some partisan or other group identity as the core element of this type of polarisation.

It is important to notice that a significant number of studies refer to evaluations not of ordinary partisans, but of political parties or even party leaders or candidates (e.g. Gidron et al. 2020; Reiljan 2020). Therefore, the term ‘affective polarisation’, in fact, encapsulates a different set of attitudes towards a range of political objects (partisans, parties, leaders). Research have shown that individuals generally have more positive feelings towards opposing party supporters than they do towards the party itself and its leader (Druckman and Levendusky 2019), and that the polarisation of feelings for leaders tends to be lower than for parties in parliamentary and/or fragmented party systems (Reiljan et al. 2021). These results suggest that the specific mechanisms driving affective polarisation may differ somewhat depending on the evaluated political entity, as well as its social and political implications (Kingzette 2021). We need, therefore, a further understanding of how the causes and consequences of this type of polarisation differ as a function of the object being scrutinised. The dissertation partially addresses this question in Chapter 2, which explores some factors that account for the gap between the polarisation of sentiments for parties and for voters, and Chapter 4, which explores leader affective polarisation vis-à-vis party affective polarisation.

Furthermore, affective polarisation can stem from political identities not defined by partisanship, but by shared political opinion on specific salient issues, such as Brexit in the United Kingdom (Hobolt et al. 2020). The focus of this dissertation, however, is restricted to partisan identities.

The most widely used measure of affective polarisation is the feeling thermometer question included in several surveys (Iyengar et al. 2019). This question asks

respondents to rate parties (or, less frequently, party leaders and voters) on a 101 or 11-point scale ranging from ‘dislike’ (or cold) to ‘like’ (or warm). These scales for feelings, however, have some caveats. First, their ‘underpinnings’ are not completely clear (Lelkes 2016, p. 401); that is, respondents’ dislike of a party may be motivated by different factors, such as policy disagreements or increasing social distance. Moreover, these scales may suffer from the problem labelled ‘differential item functioning’ (Wilcox et al. 1989): some respondents tend to assign higher overall liking scores, and some use a wider-ranging feelings scale. The literature partially corrects for this by calculating the difference between survey respondents’ reported liking scores for their own party and the liking scores for the opposing party or parties.

The measure of affective polarisation using thermometer feelings in the American two-party system is straightforward, given that it is simply computed as the difference between the in-party score and the out-party score (Iyengar et al. 2012). In multiparty contexts, however, the measure of this phenomenon appears to be more complex because citizens are not necessarily attached to a single party, and they have multiple out-parties that can be evaluated with different degrees of dislike (e.g. Wagner 2021). Reiljan (2020, pp. 380–381) has proposed an influential index measured at the country level that indicates the average divergence of respondents’ affective evaluations between in-party and out-parties, weighted by the electoral size (that is, vote share) of the parties. At the individual level, Wagner (2021, pp. 3–5) proposes an alternative index that measures the extent to which the respondent’s affect is spread across the various relevant parties in a given multiparty system; he also defines affective polarisation as the average affective distance of other parties from one’s preferred party, which has the same logic as Reiljan’s (2020) aggregate index.

The election of the specific measure depends on the research interests. As Wagner (2021) argued, the spread-of-scores measure better captures opposition between blocs of parties rather than between single parties, and it incorporates respondents without any clear attachment to a specific party. By contrast, the mean-distance index is preferable if the focus is on exclusive partisan identities. I have relied on the distance measure of affective polarisation because the theoretical framework developed in the dissertation requires distinguishing between individuals’ own party and out-parties. In some of the analyses, I also use, separately, the feelings scale towards the respondent’s in-group and the reversed feelings scale (measuring negative feelings) towards the respondent’s out-

groups. The dissertation makes frequent reference to sentiments about parties, their leaders and their voters.

Apart from the feeling thermometer, more sophisticated techniques to measure affective polarisation have also been developed in the literature, although they could not be used in this dissertation (Iyengar et al. 2019). Some studies employ, still within the scope of survey self-reports, social distance measures or party supporters' trait ratings (e.g. Iyengar et al. 2012; Klar et al. 2018). Another technique involves implicit measures, which allow capturing unconscious affective attitudes and control for social desirability bias (e.g. Iyengar and Westwood 2015). Lastly, a different set of behavioural measures have also been used in the literature (e.g. McConnell et al. 2018). In comparative research, most studies use feeling thermometers (towards parties), although some works employ distance measures or trust games (e.g. Helbling and Jungkunz 2020; Hobolt et al. 2020; Westwood et al. 2018).

1.2. Causes of Affective Polarisation

The literature exploring affective polarisation is mainly rooted in social identity theory (e.g. Huddy 2001; Tajfel and Turner 1979). Social psychology experiments indicate that people are motivated to positively distinguish their group from others, leading to the development of in-group bias, even in the most basic definition of a group (conformed by people who had never met before and whose existence had only learned of minutes earlier) and in a context with no competition between the groups over real resources. Therefore, minimal group membership is enough to lead people to hold positive feelings for the in-group and no positive sentiment towards out-groups. Under circumstances of perceived threat or competition, however, in-group liking can lead to open hostility towards out-groups (e.g. Mason 2018, pp. 10-12; Tajfel et al. 1971). The experimental evidence, hence, suggests that in-group bias is a deeply rooted psychological function in human-beings that, under some circumstances, can degenerate into inter-group conflict.

Transferring this theoretical framework to the competitive sphere of political parties, some scholars argue that partisanship is more expressive than instrumental in nature: it is not merely a reflection of proximity to the party in terms of ideological beliefs, interests or party performance; rather, it primarily constitutes an enduring social identity

(Huddy et al. 2015). Thus, the mere act of identifying with a party is sufficient to develop negative feelings towards the opposition (Iyengar et al. 2012; Iyengar and Westwood 2015), and the greater the partisan identity, the stronger the emotional reactions to electoral threats (Huddy et al. 2015; Huddy et al. 2018).

In this vein, some studies argue and provide evidence that the rise in American affective polarisation is the product of an increasing alignment of social and political identities along party lines, which is labelled ‘social sorting’ (Mason 2015; 2016; 2018). That is, Democrats and Republicans increasingly differ in their ideological identities and social composition (ethnicity, religion, gender, age or place of residence), which leads to the conformation of a psychologically durable partisan social identity that acts as ‘a tribe’ binding all social and political identities together (Mason and Wronski 2018, p. 274). At the same time, those individuals with highly aligned identities tend to be more hostile towards out-party members without necessarily changing their ideological positions. Beyond the U.S., social sorting also appears to be significantly associated with a worldwide trend towards affective polarisation (Harteveld 2021b). This dissertation indicates that social sorting significantly predicts which citizens are more likely than others to extend the antipathy they feel towards particular parties to those parties’ rank-and-file supporters.

However, this identity-based explanation has some limitations. West and Iyengar (2020) have found limited evidence that when partisan social identity is made less salient, either by way of natural variation in the salience of partisanship or through an experimental self-affirmation treatment, partisans express lower levels of out-group animus, which suggests that group identity should not be the unique explanation behind affective polarisation. Rudolph and Hetherington (2021) explore affective polarisation in political and non-political settings. Their results show that, while in-party liking is the dominant source of polarisation in non-political scenarios, out-party hostility is the more dominant source in the political sphere, which casts doubt on the suitability of social identity theory to explaining affective polarisation in political contexts.

Another important set of studies defends the claim that ideology constitutes the main driver of affective polarisation. Bougher (2017) indicates, for the U.S. case, that the alignment of multiple policy-issue attitudes along the ideological spectrum fuels affective polarisation and, specifically, negative out-party affect. However, these

findings are partially challenged by *Lelkes (2018)*, who only finds a weak (and reciprocal) relationship between ideological sorting and affective polarisation. Others find, also in the U.S., that ideological differences between parties and their candidates are likely to influence citizens' affective evaluations of these parties and candidates (e.g. *Rogowski and Sutherland 2016*); similarly, ideological distance between the respondent and the opposing party and its candidate fuels hostility of the former towards the latter (e.g. *Lelkes 2021; Webster and Abramowitz 2017*). The purported reasons behind these findings are that ideological polarisation increases the stakes associated with vote choice and accentuates the tendency of citizens to use motivated reasoning to support their preferred electoral option. In multiparty systems, where citizens have more than one out-party, dislike towards out-parties and their partisans has also been found to increase with ideological distance (*Harteveld 2021a; Westwood et al. 2018*). As the present PhD dissertation shows, ideological distance also constitutes a relevant factor in predicting when hostility towards out-parties spills over to their voters.

The literature also suggests that some policy issues fuel affective polarisation more than others. The pre-eminence of cultural issues in current politics as observed by different scholars could indicate that they have more polarising effects than economic issues (e.g. *Norris and Inglehart 2019*). In a comparative analysis, *Gidron et al. (2020)* find that as party elites become more polarised around cultural issues such as national identity and multiculturalism, aggregate levels of affective polarisation tend to increase. By contrast, this relationship is not observed in the case of economic issues. Similar results are found by *Harteveld (2021a)* in the Netherlands. In Sweden, *Reiljan and Ryan (2021)* find that socioeconomic positions constitute the strongest driver of affective polarisation between the mainstream blocs, while the issue of immigration is more important between radical right and mainstream parties. Congruent with these results, radical right parties and their voters appear to attract the highest levels of negative evaluations among the Western European electorate, while radical right supporters also express high levels of hostility towards the other parties and partisans (e.g. *Harteveld et al. 2021; Helbling and Jungkunz 2020; Meléndez and Kaltwasser 2021*). The antipathy attracted by the radical right could be related to the social stigma surrounding these parties, which in turn may be explained by their (explicit or implicit) support for discrimination against people on the basis of their ethnicity or religion (see *Harteveld et al. 2019*). This PhD dissertation

also deals with the relationship between the electoral emergence of radical right parties and affective polarisation.

Electoral campaigns have also been found to spur affective polarisation. In the context of the U.S. presidential elections, Sood and Iyengar (2016) show that partisans' affective evaluations of their opposing party's presidential candidate become more hostile as a result of exposure to the electoral campaign and particularly to negative advertising. Some additional evidence, using experimental designs, indicates that the exposure to negative political ads increases affective polarisation (e.g. Lau et al. 2017). In a cross-national study, Hernández et al. (2021) provide evidence that election salience polarises feelings towards parties by activating partisan identification and strengthening the perceived ideological polarisation between parties; after elections, citizens progressively depolarise because they become less strongly identified with their party and perceive fewer ideological discrepancies. In the dissertation, I analyse the impact of parties' electoral performance on leader and party-affective polarisation. The results obtained may have relevant implications for this literature exploring the polarising effects of elections. Specifically, they suggest that the progressive depolarisation process following an election may be conditioned by the electoral results of voters' preferred party (or voters' out-parties), even more so if party leaders are the evaluated political object.

Additionally, researchers have explored some other factors that may drive affective polarisation, although they have not been considered in this dissertation. Mainstream media coverage of partisan polarisation in the U.S. has been observed to increase voters' dislike of the opposition party (Levendusky and Malhotra 2016). The polarising effects of partisan media have also been explored (Druckman et al. 2018). Further, there is an interesting on-going debate about the relationship between consumption of social media and affective polarisation (see Barberá 2020 for a review). In a comparative perspective, greater income inequality or unemployment have been found to intensify affective polarisation, and electoral institutions also shape aggregate levels of out-party dislike and in-party liking (Gidron et al. 2020).

1.3. Consequences of Affective Polarisation

The relevance of studying affective polarisation can be measured by its important social and political consequences. Part of the literature explores the extent to which partisan animus affects everyday interactions between people. Some studies show that a significant number of survey respondents tend to express their discomfort in establishing social relationships with people who support opposing parties (e.g. Iyengar et al. 2012). These survey responses seem to partially predict peoples' behaviour. For example, some empirical evidence indicates that individuals tend to seek politically similar relationship partners (Huber and Malhotra 2017) or that people living in politically incongruent environments tend to have greater difficulties in forming close relationships (e.g. Chopik and Motyl 2016). Some other studies also find that partisanship shapes everyday economic behaviour (e.g. McConnell et al. 2018) or even professional decisions (e.g. Hersh and Goldenberg 2016).

Further, affective polarisation affects attitudes and behaviours that are at the core of a democratic system. Partisan social identity has been found to promote anti-deliberative attitudes towards political disagreement (Strickler 2018). Dehumanisation of the members of the opposing party is relatively widespread among both Democrats and Republicans in the U.S., although it appears to be especially prevalent among the most affectively polarised partisans (Martherus et al. 2021). Americans with high levels of affective polarisation endorse discriminatory behaviour by favouring co-partisans, but not by hurting the opponent (Lelkes and Westwood 2017; Tappin and McKay 2019). Other research has found that only a small minority of Americans support partisan violence, but that this support increases with party identity strength and the expectation of the electoral victory of one's own party (Kalmoe and Mason 2019). Affective polarisation is also associated with lower levels of satisfaction with democracy (Wagner 2021), and it erodes political trust among supporters of parties in the opposition (Hetherington and Rudolph 2015). This type of polarisation also fuels the perceived ideological discrepancies between parties (Armaly and Enders 2020; Ward and Tavits 2019). Other contributions analyse, in comparative perspective, the different steps by which affective polarisation may lead to democratic backsliding (e.g. McCoy et al. 2018; McCoy and Somer 2019). The present dissertation provides empirical evidence that the emergence of radical right parties is rooted in previous affective evaluations of partisans.

Despite its disturbing consequences, it is worth noting that affective polarisation has a more positive facet. Concretely, individuals holding highly polarised feelings about parties tend to perceive that a lot is at stake in elections and that they can change politics at the ballot box, which leads them to participate in elections and in different forms of activism to a greater extent than the less polarised (Iyengar and Krupenkin 2018; Wagner 2021; Ward and Tavits 2019). Thus, the literature suggests that, while hostility between partisans has clear disturbing consequences, the polarisation of feelings for parties may have some positive implications for democracy. This further justifies exploring the determinants of the gap between the affective polarisation of parties and voters conducted in this dissertation.

1.4. Contributions of the PhD Dissertation

Some of the topics discussed above on affective polarisation are addressed in this PhD dissertation. The first one refers to the existing gap between affective polarisation of the party and the voters. Negative evaluations of out-parties tend to overestimate hostility towards the rank-and-file supporters of these parties (e.g. Druckman and Levendusky 2019), but we do not know much about what determines the differences between both measures. That is, some individuals may be more prone than others to extend their feelings about parties to voters. Furthermore, the same person may tend to differentiate to a greater or lesser extent a party from its ordinary supporters in her evaluations depending on the characteristics of that party. Hartevelde (2021a) explores this question for the case of the Netherlands. He finds that partisans of radical right parties appear to attract the highest levels of dislike, even when the relationship is controlled by party sympathy; moreover, those individuals for whom politics is more salient are more likely to extend their negative feeling about parties to their ordinary voters.

Building on this research, Chapter 2 of this dissertation accounts for the gap between party affective polarisation (PAP) and voter affective polarisation (VAP) by exploring the role of two factors: ideological distance between individuals and their out-parties and social sorting. First, I argue that, when the ideological distance is moderate, individuals evaluate their out-parties much worse than the supporters of these parties. This is because voters are viewed as partially disconnected to the party they support, so that they are evaluated not only based on ideological differences, but also on perceived

personhood similarities (e.g. Sears 1983). However, when the ideological distance is very great, voters of out-parties are evaluated mainly based on ideological dissimilarities (Nilsson and Ekehammar 1987), so that individuals extend the antipathy they feel towards parties to voters, and the PAP–VAP gap is substantially reduced. Second, those individuals whose different social identities are aligned with their partisan preferences develop strong partisan identities (Mason and Wronski 2018) and tend to be more intolerant towards out-group members (Roccas and Brewer 2002), so that they are expected to extend their polarised affective evaluations of parties to those parties' voters. By contrast, individuals with low levels of social sorting are expected to develop resentment towards ordinary voters of opposing parties to a much lower degree than towards the opposing parties themselves. I provide some empirical evidence in support of these expectations for the case of Spain.

The study of the determinants of the PAP–VAP gap, moreover, has relevant implications for the consequences of affective polarisation. While PAP appears to have some positive repercussions, in the sense that it tends to increase individuals' political involvement and participation, VAP has clearly negative social and political consequences. The results of this dissertation suggest that the contention of ideological polarisation in intermediate levels, as well as the preservation of cross-cutting social and political identities among the population, is necessary to maintain the most positive aspects of polarisation while limiting the resentment between partisans to relatively low levels.

Another topic addressed in this dissertation is how the rise of radical right parties is related to affective polarisation. We know that supporters of these parties tend to express and, in particular, receive high levels of antipathy (e.g. Hartevelt 2021a; Helbling and Jungkunz 2020). In the dissertation, I find that the negative evaluations that the Spanish radical right VOX party attracts spill over to its voters to a greater degree than the evaluations attracted by the remaining parties. Moreover, elite polarisation around 'cultural' issues, which tend to be 'owned' by the radical right, is positively associated with affective polarisation (e.g. Gidron et al. 2020). However, does the emergence of these parties fuel the polarisation of public feelings about partisans, or rather does this type of polarisation precede the initial electoral success of radical right parties?

In Chapter 3, I develop together with Professor Mariano Torcal a theoretical framework about the affective roots and consequences of the electoral emergence of radical right parties, which is then tested for the case of VOX in Spain. On the one hand, we argue that the initial electoral success of these parties could result from previous polarising strategies developed by moderate right parties around sociocultural issues that fostered the resentment of a portion of their electorate towards left-wing parties and their voters. Then, these centre-right electors who hold the most hostile attitudes towards left-wing voters would be the most easily seduced by the Manichean and aggressive rhetoric of the radical right and, hence, the most likely to drop their support for the moderate right and embrace the rising radical right party (e.g. Nai 2021). Simultaneously, the emergence of these parties could also come from disaffected electors of moderate right parties who feel that their party is not living up to its social conservative discourse and therefore exhibit low levels of positive affective attachments towards their partisan group (Bonikowski and Ziblatt 2019). Congruent with our arguments, we provide evidence that moderate right partisans who held, before the emergence of VOX, high levels of antipathy towards left-wing voters and low levels of positive sentiments towards their own partisan group were more likely to support VOX some months later.

On the other hand, we expect that the emergence of a radical right party fuels popular levels of affective polarisation, although for different reasons and with different intensities depending on the partisan group. First, those switching their support to a rising radical right party would experience a relevant increase in their in-group liking. That is because most of them are former supporters of the moderate right disaffected with their old party, who have been attracted by a radical right party that offered them an appealing alternative electoral option. Second, to the extent that the radical right represents a stronger threat to partisans of left-wing parties than to moderate right partisans, we expect that the former react to the success of the radical right by polarising their feelings about partisans to a greater degree than the latter (e.g. Huddy et al. 2015). We provide empirical evidence in support of these expectations for the case of VOX.

Finally, in Chapter 4, this PhD dissertation also deals with the polarisation of feelings about party leaders. Studies have reported an increasingly relevant role for leaders in contemporary democracies as well as parliamentary and multiparty systems (e.g. Garzia et al. 2020). Some even argue that leaders may constitute as source of new ‘cleavages’ that polarise the electorate around them (Bordignon 2020). However, the literature

exploring leader affective polarisation (LAP) outside the U.S. is very scarce, especially the studies comparing LAP with the most frequently analysed PAP. Reiljan et al. (2021) remain unique in their exploration of the relative strengths of LAP vis-à-vis PAP at the aggregate level. They show that the average level of LAP is consistently lower than PAP; moreover, the polarisation of feelings about leaders is lower in parliamentary democracies than in presidential systems, and the relative strength of LAP decreases with party system fragmentation. I build on this research by exploring LAP vis-à-vis PAP in Western Europe and, specifically, the role of parties' electoral wins and losses in explaining the difference between both types of polarisation.

The main argument is that political parties are thought of in more universal and unchanging terms than party leaders; thus, affective evaluations of the latter are more likely to be influenced by the specific context of electoral success or failure than evaluations of the former (Moon and Conlon 2002; Naquin and Tynan 2003). In consequence, LAP varies in strength relative to PAP as a function of the electoral performance of parties. The loss of support for one's own party in national elections leads partisans to blame the leader for the failure to a greater degree than the party itself, so that the leader suffers a greater reduction in positive sentiments than the party. By contrast, when one's own party increases support in national elections, the leader is credited and obtains positive affective evaluations. Consequently, LAP is lower than PAP among partisans whose in-party failed, but LAP is quite similar to PAP among followers whose preferred party obtained electoral gains. The same logic is applied to out-parties. Individuals tend to diminish the negative affective evaluations of the leaders of successful out-parties to a greater degree than the evaluations of out-parties. In contrast, the leaders of out-parties that lose votes in elections suffer an increase in negative evaluations. As a result, LAP is expected to be less potent than PAP for electorally successful out-parties than for out-parties that failed in national elections. I provide empirical evidence in support of these expectations for Western European countries.

These results are relevant considering the growing centrality of leaders in Western Europe. To the extent that the polarisation of feelings about leaders gains prominence as part of the general polarisation dynamics in contemporary democracies, polarisation tendencies would become more volatile (and more prone to influence from electoral results for particular parties). This analysis also has relevant implications for the

literature exploring the effects of electoral campaigns on affective polarisation (Hernández et al. 2021).

1.5. Data and Methods

The empirical analyses draw on data from two sources. The first one is the E-DEM panel survey dataset¹ (Torcal et al. 2020). This is a micro-level online panel survey of the Spanish voting age population composed of four waves carried out over a six-month period between late October 2018 and May 2019. The dataset includes a battery of affective and ideological polarisation indicators that makes it suitable for the purposes of the PhD dissertation, including evaluations of parties, leaders, voters and members of other social groups. Moreover, it also contains variables investigating political opinions, attitudes and behaviours.

The E-DEM dataset is used in analysing the determinants of the gap between PAP and VAP (Chapter 2 of the dissertation) as well as in the study of the relationship between affective polarisation and the emergence of radical right parties (Chapter 3). Concerning the first analysis, I have used the third wave of the panel survey, which contains all the necessary variables, including feelings about the main Spanish parties and their voters. For the second analysis, I take advantage of the first and the third waves of the panel survey. The first wave was conducted between late October and early November 2018, around one month before the breakthrough of VOX in the Andalusian regional election. VOX obtained political representation for the first time in this regional election, which catapulted it to the national level. The third wave occurred at the end of April 2019, some months after the emergence of VOX in Andalucía and just before the April general elections, in which VOX obtained 10.26% of the vote and 24 (out of 350) seats.

Spain constitutes a good case study for this dissertation. The country presents a relatively high level of affective polarisation (Gidron et al. 2020) that has followed an (irregular) upward trend since the early 1990s (Torcal 2021). The Spanish party system has experienced a deep transformation during the last decade going from imperfect bipartisanship to the current multiparty system, in which the main party families (from

¹ Data available at: <https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/6bt6r8cn2r/3>.

the radical left to the radical right) are represented in the national parliament (Rama et al. 2021). The Spanish case, hence, allows a proper exploration of how different levels of ideological distance between respondents and their out-parties affect the gap between PAP and VAP. Moreover, Spain is characterised by the superposition of different salient cleavages and social identities, the economic and the territorial divides being especially relevant, but also others such as religious or generational ones. This makes Spain an interesting case to analyse the impact of social sorting on PAP and VAP. Finally, the recently rising VOX is a clear representative of the radical right party family (Ferreira 2019): Spanish nationalism, nativism and authoritarianism are central elements in the party's ideology, and populism is also present in the rhetoric of its leaders.

The second source employed in the dissertation is the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) dataset². The CSES is a collaborative programme of research among election study teams from around the world. Concretely, the dataset comprises five standard modules of nationally representative post-election surveys administered on at least one of the modules in 56 countries. These data are used to compare LAP to PAP in Western Europe (Chapter 4 of the dissertation), given that they include like–dislike scales with respect to the relevant parties and their leaders in each country-election, with the exception of those surveys included in module 2 that do not incorporate scales concerning leaders. For the purposes of the dissertation, I have selected all Western European national elections that include like–dislike scales for both parties and leaders, aggregating a total of 57 national elections nested in 18 countries³. To measure the electoral wins and losses of the different parties in each selected national election, I have relied on the official results of the different elections included in the study.

I employed different specific methods depending on the purposes of each analysis. In the study of the determinants of the gap between PAP and VAP (Chapter 2), in which the main independent variables are ideological distance and social sorting, I have stacked the dataset by out-party, so that each respondent appears once for each out-party evaluated. In some models, I include respondent fixed effects. In this way, I account for the between-respondent factors, and the relationships are explored on a within-respondent basis. When I am interested in analysing the effect of some independent

² Data available at: <https://cses.org/data-download/>.

³ In fact, 17 countries have been selected, but Flanders and Wallonia in Belgium are treated separately in the survey.

variables measured at the respondent level, linear random intercept models with respondent out-parties nested within respondents are conducted. All these models include out-party dummies and standard errors clustered by respondent.

In the study that explores the relationship between radical right parties and affective polarisation (Chapter 3), I take advantage of the panel structure of the data in two ways. For exploring the affective roots of the emergence of VOX, I employ logistic regression models that predict the probability of becoming a VOX partisan at wave 3 (after VOX's emergence) as a function of different affective evaluations and some control variables measured at wave 1 (before VOX's emergence). For testing the affective consequences of the rise of VOX, we employ several respondent fixed effects linear models that estimate the change between waves 3 and 1 in affective polarisation across partisan groups, controlling for some key variables. In these models, standard errors are also clustered by respondent.

Finally, I have employed two types of models to test the effect of parties' electoral performance on PAP and LAP (Chapter 4). I test the effect of electoral wins and losses by the in-parties by employing linear random intercept models with respondents nested within in-party elections, including country-election fixed effects. However, the dataset was stacked by out-party election to explore the effect of out-parties' electoral performance, so that each observation is a response by an out-party election 'dyad'. Respondent fixed effects are included, and standard errors are clustered by country-election.

1.6. Structure of the PhD Dissertation

The dissertation is structured as follows. In Chapter 2, I explore some of the factors that account for the gap between PAP and VAP. As explained above, I argue and empirically demonstrate that the PAP–VAP gap increases with ideological distance, although it begins to decrease after a certain level of ideological discrepancies. Further, social sorting increases the likelihood of individuals extending the antipathy they feel towards opposing parties to their ordinary voters, thus reducing the PAP–VAP gap. I provide empirical evidence of the relevance of these two factors to predict the PAP–

VAP gap by using the third wave of the Spanish E-DEM panel, which includes feelings about parties and their voters.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to exploring the relationship between the electoral emergence of radical right parties and affective polarisation. Professor Mariano Torcal and I argue that affective polarisation is not only a consequence of the rise of these parties, but also a cause of their initial electoral success. Specifically, the emergence of radical right parties is expected to be preceded by high levels of hostility towards left-wing partisans among supporters of moderate right parties and, simultaneously, low levels of in-group liking. Moreover, the success of such parties fuels overall levels of affective polarisation, although due to different reasons and to a different degree across partisan groups. We provide empirical evidence in support of these expectations by using the Spanish E-DEM panel survey, which covers the entire period of the electoral emergence of the radical right party VOX.

Chapter 4 explores LAP vis-à-vis PAP in Western Europe. As indicated above, I theoretically develop and empirically test a set of expectations of the (differential) impact of the parties' electoral performance on LAP and PAP. Specifically, the electoral performance of parties is expected to influence individual affective evaluations of party leaders more than the assessments of the parties, which tend to be more consistent over time. Thus, the strength of LAP varies compared to PAP as a function of the same. I provide empirical evidence in support of this theoretical framework using the post-electoral surveys from the CSES, which includes like–dislike scales for parties and their leaders.

Finally, Chapter 5 concludes with a summary of the main findings and their implications, a discussion of the limitations of the dissertation and some suggestions for future research.

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2. WHEN POLARISED FEELINGS TOWARDS PARTIES SPREAD TO VOTERS: THE ROLE OF IDEOLOGICAL DISTANCE AND SOCIAL SORTING IN SPAIN

Abstract. Affective polarisation measured with feelings towards political parties overestimates the degree to which people dislike ordinary partisans of opposing parties, which lies at the core of the definition of this type of polarisation. This paper explores some of the factors that account for the gap between party affective polarisation (PAP) and voter affective polarisation (VAP). In particular, I first argue and empirically show that the PAP-VAP gap increases with ideological distance between individual and out-parties, although this difference begins to decrease after a certain level of ideological discrepancy is achieved. Second, social sorting increases the probability that individuals extend their antipathy towards parties to their voters, thus reducing the PAP-VAP gap. I discuss the relevance of these two factors by utilising the third wave of the Spanish E-DEM panel, conducted in April 2019, which contains feelings for the main Spanish parties and their voters. The results have relevant implications for the study of the consequences of affective polarisation.

Keywords: Voter affective polarisation, party affective polarisation, ideological polarisation, social sorting, Spain

2.1. Introduction

Affective polarisation generally refers to the extent to which partisans view opposing partisans negatively and copartisans positively (e.g. Iyengar et al. 2012; Iyengar and Westwood 2015). In the United States (U.S.), scholars have employed different techniques to measure this type of polarisation, such as feeling thermometer questions in surveys that ask respondents to rate parties or partisans, social distance measures and behavioural or implicit measures (Iyengar et al. 2019). Outside the U.S., the majority of comparative studies capture this phenomenon using feeling thermometer questions towards political parties. This is the most available measure in cross-country surveys (e.g. Gidron et al. 2020; Reiljan 2020; Wagner 2021; Ward and Tavits 2019), although there are other studies that use thermometer feelings towards voters, social distances measures and trust games (e.g. Helbling and Jungkunz 2020; Hobolt et al. 2020; Westwood et al. 2018).

However, when people evaluate political parties, they typically think in terms of elites more than voters. As has been found in a couple of experimental studies conducted in the U.S., whereas there is no significant difference between individuals' feelings for the opposing party and its leader, individuals generally have more positive feelings towards party supporters than they do towards the party itself and its leader (Druckman and Levendusky 2019; Kingzette 2021). Similarly, recent research conducted in specific Western European countries shows that respondents' evaluations of partisans imperfectly correlate with evaluations of their respective parties (Harteveld 2021a; Knudsen 2021). Therefore, the use of feeling thermometer scales to express attitudes towards parties to measure affective polarisation tends to overestimate the degree to which people dislike ordinary voters of the opposing parties, which lies at the core of the definition of this type of polarisation. Furthermore, Harteveld (2021a) empirically shows that the divergence between the two measures is associated with the features of some individuals, leading to the general conclusion that citizens for whom politics is more salient tend to extend their negative feelings about parties to their voters.

This paper is a study of the determinants of the party affective polarisation (PAP) and voter affective polarisation (VAP) gap. Specifically, the role of two factors is considered: the ideological distance between citizens and their out-parties and social sorting, which refers to the alignment of different salient social identities (such as class,

religion or ethnicity) along party lines. In the following pages, I first argue that citizens' hostility is mainly focused on political parties and not so much on voters when the ideological distance is moderate. However, when the ideological distance is great, hostility towards voters of out-parties also increases substantially, in some cases reducing and even closing the PAP-VAP gap. Second, I contend, in line with previous research showing that social sorting fuels affective polarisation (e.g. Hartevelde 2021b; Mason 2016), that citizens whose social identities are aligned with their party preferences are more prone to extend their polarised feelings about parties to party members.

The preceding arguments have relevant social and political implications. Whereas the polarisation of feelings about parties has a positive facet, in the sense that it spurs political interest and participation (e.g. Ward and Tavits 2019), the spread of partisan resentment to ordinary voters is unequivocally related to a set of pernicious social and political consequences related to social divisions and animosity. People's perception of politics and society in terms of 'us' versus 'them' undermines social cohesion, fuels political instability and erodes democratic norms and institutions (e.g. McCoy et al. 2018; McCoy and Somer 2019).

These expectations are demonstrated by utilising the third wave of an original online panel survey conducted in Spain between 2018 and 2019 (E-DEM), which includes both feelings towards parties and their voters (Torcal et al. 2020).

2.2. Theoretical Framework

2.2.1. Affective polarisation towards parties and voters

The polarisation of feelings about parties has been found to be higher than those towards partisans. Iyengar et al. (2012), in their seminal article, compared differences in evaluations of parties with party supporters using two surveys of the American National Election Studies. The results showed that out-partisans were evaluated more favourably than the out-party itself, while the differences between in-party and in-partisan ratings were non-existent. The experimental studies conducted by Druckman and Levendusky (2019) and Kingzette (2021) in the U.S. also signalled that partisans' feelings towards voters of the opposing party were more positive than their feelings towards the opposing

party itself and its leaders. Knudsen (2021) compared affective polarisation towards parties (using a like-dislike scale) and voters (using the inter-party marriage measure) in Norway and the U.S., showing that differences between both countries are relevant in PAP but insignificant in VAP; hence, conclusions based on cross-country differences may depend on the measurement and the object of polarisation, a finding that signals the relevance of exploring which factors predict the gap between PAP and VAP. In a study of the Netherlands, Hartevelde (2021a) provides further evidence that respondents' dislike of parties and their partisans are only moderately correlated. Similarly, Tocal and Comellas (forthcoming) show, in the case of Spain, that affective polarisation is weaker when it is measured using feeling scales for voters than for party leaders.

These previous results can be understood in light of the 'person-positivity bias', according to which attitude objects that resemble individual human beings are evaluated more favourably than inanimate objects or grouped versions of the same individuals. This phenomenon has been demonstrated in assessments of public figures (Lau et al. 1979), politicians (Granberg and Holmberg 1990), gender grouping (Miller and Felicio 1990), immigrants (Iyengar et al. 2013) or gays and lesbians (McCabe 2019). Sears (1983) argued that perceived personhood similarity produces positive evaluations. Furthermore, additional research studies have suggested that the mere exposure to individuating information weakens the connections between an individual and the group she represents because perceptions become less reliant on stereotypes and more focused on attributes of the individual person (Iyengar et al. 2013, pp. 643-644). Miller and Felicio (1990) also observed that person-positivity bias occurs only when people evaluate others they dislike. The alleged reason is that 'sharing a status as an individual human being may be one of the few similarities between themselves and those being evaluated, whereas the group lacks even this minimal similarity' (Miller and Felicio 1990, p. 409). Thus, it is not surprising that supporters of opposing political parties tend to be evaluated more favourably than their parties.

Which are the factors that explain why some citizens are more likely than others to extend their antipathy towards opposing parties to party members? Hartevelde (2021a) explores this question in the Dutch case by showing that the part of partisan antipathy that is not explained by evaluations of parties themselves is systematically related to a set of party-level and individual-level variables. On the one hand, supporters of the radical right appear to attract the highest levels of dislike, even when the relationship is

controlled by party sympathy, suggesting that the antipathy towards parties of the radical right spill over to their partisans. On the other hand, those respondents with higher levels of ideological extremism and party identification tend to express higher levels of antipathy towards partisans of out-parties, controlling for out-party sympathy.

Building on this existing research, in the sections that follow, I argue that ideological distance and social sorting are key factors that account for the gap between PAP and VAP.

2.2.2. Ideological distance

According to belief congruence theory, prejudice is rooted in the assumption of dissimilarity in beliefs between oneself and out-group members (Boucher 2017). Moreover, ideological polarisation among political elites raises the stakes of politics (as it increases the risk of having an extremist politician in government) and this in turn fuels partisan animosity. Congruently, different studies in the U.S. have found that the greater the ideological distance between an individual and the opposing party and its candidate, the less positive are the feelings held by the former towards the latter (e.g. Lelkes 2021; Webster and Abramowitz 2017). In multiparty systems, where citizens are not necessarily attached to a single party and have multiple out-parties that can be evaluated with different degrees of antipathy (e.g. Wagner 2021), dislike towards out-parties and their partisans also increases with ideological distance (Harteveld 2021a; Westwood et al. 2018).

The effect of ideological distance between individuals and their out-parties on affective polarisation may differ depending on the evaluated political object and its levels of personhood (Sears 1983). According to the social psychology literature, when observers evaluate people's attributes, they tend to rely more on the specific properties of the individual than on the stereotypes or general properties of the group to which the person belongs (e.g. Krueger and Rothbart 1988). If this same logic is applied to judgements regarding political objects, it is expected that voters are viewed as partially disconnected from the party they support. Moreover, as mentioned above, person-positivity bias particularly applies when rating disliked groups (Miller and Felicio 1990). Thus, citizens' evaluations of out-voters would not be based only on the degree of the

ideological discrepancy between themselves and voters' parties but also on perceived personhood similarities, which attenuate negative perceptions. As a result, ideological distance would fuel hostility towards out-parties to a greater degree than hostility towards the rank-and-file supporters of these parties. When the ideological discrepancies are very small, both the out-party and its supporters would be evaluated quite positively without great differences between them; nevertheless, out-parties would be evaluated significantly worse than their voters when the ideological distance is greater.

However, the person-positivity bias has been shown to have quite limited generalisability. As Nilsson and Ekehammar (1987) have argued, this bias is expected to appear only when the assumed similarity is based on the personhood dimension, but not when it is based on some other dimension, such as ideology. Thus, 'when the assumption of similarity is impossible (e.g. a communist subject evaluating a conservative person), there is no reason for expecting the bias, notwithstanding that the attitude object is a specific person' (Nilsson and Ekehammar 1987, p. 249). Although I have argued above that the person-positivity bias mainly applies for those out-parties that are ideologically far apart, I expect, based on Nilsson and Ekehammar's (1987) reasoning, that this bias is reduced when the ideological discrepancies are so great that the perceived personhood similarity between evaluators and out-parties' supporters is significantly attenuated. That is, after a certain level of ideological distance, the degree to which citizens distinguish supporters from their parties diminishes and partisans are increasingly evaluated based on the dimension of ideology, not personhood. Consequently, ideological distance is expected to fuel negative feelings for the voters of out-parties in an increasingly strong way.

To sum up, the PAP-VAP gap is predicted to follow a negative quadratic relationship with ideological distance: the difference between positive feelings for one's own party and out-parties (PAP) increases to a greater degree than the difference between feelings towards copartisans and opposing partisans (VAP) with ideological distance; however, at a certain level of distance, the PAP-VAP gap progressively decreases. The first set of hypotheses, hence, is the following:

H1a. The difference between PAP and VAP increases with a greater ideological distance with the evaluated out-party.

H1b. The difference between PAP and VAP begins to decrease after a certain level of ideological distance.

2.2.3. Social sorting

Whereas some scholars are focused on the ideological origins of affective polarisation, others argue that political and social identities are the main drivers of this type of polarisation (e.g. Huddy et al. 2015; Iyengar et al. 2012; Iyengar and Westwood 2015). Mason (2016; 2018a) shows, in the case of the U.S., that the increasing alignment of religious, racial and other political movement identities along party lines (what she calls ‘social sorting’) has generated an increasingly affectively polarised electorate by strengthening both in-group attachment and out-group hostility. Moreover, the analyses reveal that the *cumulative* relationship between social identities and partisan identities creates a psychologically durable partisan social identity that acts as ‘a tribe’ that binds all social and political identities together (Mason and Wronski 2018, p.274). This research is built on classical works about how cross-cutting social divisions mitigate social and political conflict (e.g. Lipset 1960), as well as on previous research in the field of social psychology showing that individuals with highly aligned identities tend to be more intolerant towards out-group members (e.g. Roccas and Brewer 2002).

In a comparative perspective, Harteveld (2021b) empirically demonstrates that social sorting is associated with the polarisation of feelings about parties around the globe. As argued by the author, the alignment of political with non-political identities is a characteristic of politics around the world, although ‘the degree and content of alignment differs between and within world regions’ (Harteveld 2021b, p. 3). In Western Europe, the central/periphery, state/church, urban/rural and, especially, workers/employer divisions gave rise to durable cleavages that structured party competition (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), although the association of most of these social divisions with vote choice has progressively declined due to socioeconomic, cultural and political transformations (e.g. Angelucci and Vittori 2021). Some scholars show that a new cleavage opposing the winners and loser of globalisation that cut across the left-right divide has been developed, and that education is a key factor identifying both groups. This new cleavage has increasingly structured party competition in Northern-

Western Europe, but no so much in most Southern European countries, such as Spain, Portugal or Greece (e.g. Kriesi et al. 2008).

I sustain that social sorting is a key factor predicting which citizens are more likely than others to extend the antipathy they feel towards parties to their supporters. Those citizens whose different social identities are aligned (or perceived to be aligned) with their partisan identity develop strong ‘tribal’ attachment to their party and copartisans (Mason and Wronski 2018), are less able to engage with their partisan opponents and are prone to view politics in terms of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ (Mason 2016; 2018a); thus, they may tend to extend their highly polarised affective evaluations of parties to the ordinary voters who belong to those political groups. By contrast, cross-pressured citizens whose partisan identity does not match most of their other social identities (or who do not perceive the cumulative alignment of their social and partisan identities) are more able to engage socially with their fellow citizens and partisan opponents and, hence, are presumed to view partisan confrontations as largely confined to the institutional and political sphere. That is, less socially sorted citizens, although they may develop some level of political resentment against political parties (due to, for example, ideological discrepancies), are much less likely to project their feelings about parties to the ordinary people supporting them.

If these expectations are true, it would be observed that, controlling for other relevant drivers of affective polarisation, the net association of social sorting with PAP is weaker than with VAP, so that the gap between PAP and VAP is smaller among the most socially sorted individuals. The second hypothesis, hence, is the following:

H2. The difference between PAP and VAP decreases as social sorting becomes greater.

Social sorting may also condition the effect of ideological distance on the gap between PAP and VAP. As previously argued, moderate levels of ideological distance between individuals and their out-parties are associated with higher levels of antipathy towards parties than towards their voters due to the person-positivity bias. In contrast, when the ideological distance is very large, the assumption of personhood affinity is less plausible and negative feelings for parties spill over to voters, in which case the PAP-VAP gap is smaller. However, highly socially sorted citizens, who tend to be less tolerant towards

out-group members (Roccas and Brewer 2002), are expected to also develop significant levels of hostility towards supporters of out-parties that are only moderately far apart in ideological terms. That is, this type of individual may tend to differentiate the party from its rank-and-file members to a lesser degree, regardless of ideological similarity. In this case, the impact of ideological distance on out-group antipathy may be quite similar for both parties and voters. Conversely, citizens who present low levels of social sorting and, hence, tend to be more cross-pressured in their social and political identities and develop more tolerant views towards out-group members, may be hostile only towards voters of out-parties that are located at the opposite end of the ideological spectrum, and likely to a lesser degree than citizens with higher levels of social sorting. Therefore, the third hypothesis is as follows:

H3. The effect of ideological distance on the difference between PAP and VAP is weaker when social sorting is greater.

2.3. Data and Case Study

To test the previous hypotheses, I utilise the Spanish E-DEM dataset (for details, see Torcal et al. 2020). Although the dataset is comprised of a four-wave online panel survey of the Spanish voting age population conducted between October 2018 and May 2019, I use the third wave of the panel because it is the only one that contains all the necessary variables for the analysis, including feeling for parties and their voters. Specifically, the selected wave was implemented just before the Spanish general elections held on 28 April 2019.

Spain constitutes a suitable case study for the purposes of the paper. First, Spain presents high levels of affective polarisation in a comparative perspective (Gidron et al. 2020), and this dynamic has followed an (irregular) upward trend over the last three decades (Torcal 2021). Second, the Spanish political party system has experienced a deep transformation during the last decade, changing from an imperfect bipartisan model to the current vibrant multiparty system (Rama et al. 2021). This period has been characterised by the surge of new (left and right-wing) radical parties and the increase of ideological polarisation (e.g. Rodríguez-Teruel 2021; Simon 2020). Current Spanish political parties cover all the main ideological families: the radical left (*Unidas*

Podemos, UP), social democracy (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*, PSOE), liberalism (*Ciudadanos*, Cs), conservatism (*Partido Popular*, PP) and the radical right (VOX). The Spanish case, hence, allows a proper exploration of how different levels of ideological distance between respondents and out-parties impact PAP and VAP.

Third, Spain is characterised by the superposition of different salient cleavages and social identities. The most relevant historical cleavages in Spain are social class, religiosity and territorial identity (Linz and Montero 1999). Since the Spanish transition to democracy in the late 1970's, several studies have explored the importance of these divisions in the Spanish electoral competition. Most of them focus on the first three decades of the democratic period, which were characterised by competition between PSOE and PP (formerly *Alianza Popular*, AP). With respect to social class, there is a significant class pattern in Spanish voting behaviour, although its overall impact is modest and has followed an irregular downward trend since it peaked in 1982. Similar to other Western countries, AP/PP has tended to obtain, compared to the PSOE, more support from highly educated people, top-income earners and professionals and the self-employed (e.g. Bauluz et al. 2021; Chhibber and Torcal 1997; Orriols 2013).

Religiosity has also played a significant role in shaping voting behaviour: the non-religious voters have always supported the left, while practising Catholics have tended to vote for AP/PP. Nevertheless, scholars generally agree that religious conflict has not been central to Spanish democracy due to the process of secularisation and the moderation of the elites (e.g. Calvo and Montero 2000; Orriols 2013). Finally, the territorial cleavage was accommodated in the new democracy by a process of political decentralisation that led to the development of distinct sub-national political arenas with the presence of strong nationalist parties, especially in Catalonia and the Basque Country. Moreover, while regional identities tend to be associated with the left, the Spanish nationalism is more closely linked to the right (e.g. Dinas 2012; Pallarés and Keating 2003).

Furthermore, these cleavages may have gained salience during the tumultuous last decade. First, the surge of the radical left *Podemos* and the centre-right Cs in the aftermath of the Great Recession was the result of a reinvigorated economic dimension (characterised by the conflict over austerity policies) and, at the same time, a crisis of political representation that was also the expression of an increasing generational

divide: young people critical of the political system were more likely to vote for Podemos and Cs, each on different sides of the ideological spectrum (Hutter et al. 2018; Vidal 2018). Second, the traditional centre-periphery division has gained prominence in recent years with the Catalan territorial conflict, which facilitated the electoral surge of the radical right and Spanish nationalist VOX (e.g. Mendes and Dennison 2021; Rodon 2020). Third, moral and religious-related conflicts have also been partially reactivated during the last two decades with the conservative opposition to the approval of progressive laws related to social issues such as same-sex marriage, abortion or gender violence (e.g. Orriols 2013). Finally, the emergence of VOX could lead to the development of the globalisation divide in Spain, although this party has mainly attracted the support of voter with high economic status and relatively high levels of education (e.g. Turnbull-Dugarte et al. 2020).

Feelings for the principal Spanish political parties (PSOE, PP, Cs, UP and VOX) were measured in eleven-point like-dislike scales ranging from ‘I don’t like it at all’ to ‘I like it very much’. Sentiments for their voters were captured by ordinal scales with the following values: 0 (‘unfavourable feelings’), 15, 30, 40, 50 (‘no feelings’), 60, 70, 85 and 100 (‘favourable feelings’). For the sake of comparability, I have re-codified the latter scales to also range from 0 to 10. Respondents were classified in the different partisan groups first based on reported party identification. Then, those respondents who were not identified with any of the main Spanish parties were classified based on their reported vote intention for the April general elections. Finally, I utilised the probabilities to vote scores (PTVs) by assigning respondents without a group to their highest PTV. The remaining respondents who could not be attributed to any partisan group were not considered in the analyses¹.

The dataset is stacked by out-party, so each observation is a respondent by an out-party ‘dyad’. I employ three different dependent variables in the models. PAP was measured as the difference between the like score for the in-party and the like score for each of the various out-parties. In the same way, VAP was obtained by calculating the difference between the feeling score for the voters of the in-party and the feeling score for each of

¹ This definition of in-parties allows me to compare the affective evaluations of parties and their voters. Wagner (2021) alternatively defines in-parties as the most-liked party (that is, the party to which the respondent attributes his/her highest like score). However, the definition of Wagner is not appropriate for the present paper because it would imply to define in-parties based on one of the two feeling scales that I aim to compare.

the voters of the different out-parties. Both PAP and VAP range from -10 to 10 , where positive values indicate that respondents evaluated their own group higher than the other group and negative values correspond to (the very few) respondents who assessed their group worse than the out-group. Finally, the difference between PAP and VAP is also used to test whether the effect of the different independent variables on the PAP-VAP gap is statistically significant or not.

The first key independent variable, measured at the respondent–out-party level, is ideological distance, which was obtained by calculating the absolute difference between a respondent’s ideological self-placement (measured on an eleven-point scale) and the ideological position of each evaluated out-party (also measured on an eleven-point scale). The left-right position of parties was obtained by calculating the mean ideological position attributed to each party by the survey respondents.

The second key independent variable, measured at the respondent level, is social sorting. Inspired by Hartevelde (2021b, p. 8), I calculate social sorting as the extent to which a respondent’s party preference can be successfully predicted by sociodemographic and identity-related variables. First, I estimated a model for each party for which I predicted the probability that the party was the preferred one (that is, the in-party) by a different set of variables capturing the main Spanish cleavages and social identities. The traditional class or economic divide is approximately captured by income, economic uncertainty and involvement with labour unions; the religiosity cleavage is captured by religious membership and church attendance; and the territorial divide is approximated by regions and two scales that ask respondents about their level of identification with, respectively, their region and Spain. I also included in the models sex (which may partially capture feminist identity), age groups (which reflect the generational divide) and education level (which is related to social class and the division of globalisation’s winners and losers) (see the Appendix for a detailed explanation of the selected variables). I then estimated, for each respondent, his/her residual according to this model². The larger the absolute residual, the worse the respondent fits the sociodemographic and identity composition of a party. Finally, the social sorting variable was obtained by calculating the respondent’s average absolute residual and

² Following Hartevelde (2021b), the residual was calculated based on OLS regression models (rather than logistic ones) to obtain continuous residuals.

then subtracting 1. The greater the score (that is, closer to 1), the more socially sorted is the respondent.

This measure has some caveats (see also Hartevelde 2021b). The first is that the different social identities are only indirectly captured by ‘objective’ sociodemographic measures; only citizens’ subjective territorial identities are directly assessed. A possible consequence of this is that the social sorting variable may, to a greater degree, reflect the alignment of these territorial identities along party lines. A second relevant limitation is that this measure assumes that respondents are aware of how the different sociodemographic factors and social identities are aligned with political parties (Mason and Wronski 2018). In the results section, I include a robustness check where I test some different specifications of the social sorting variable.

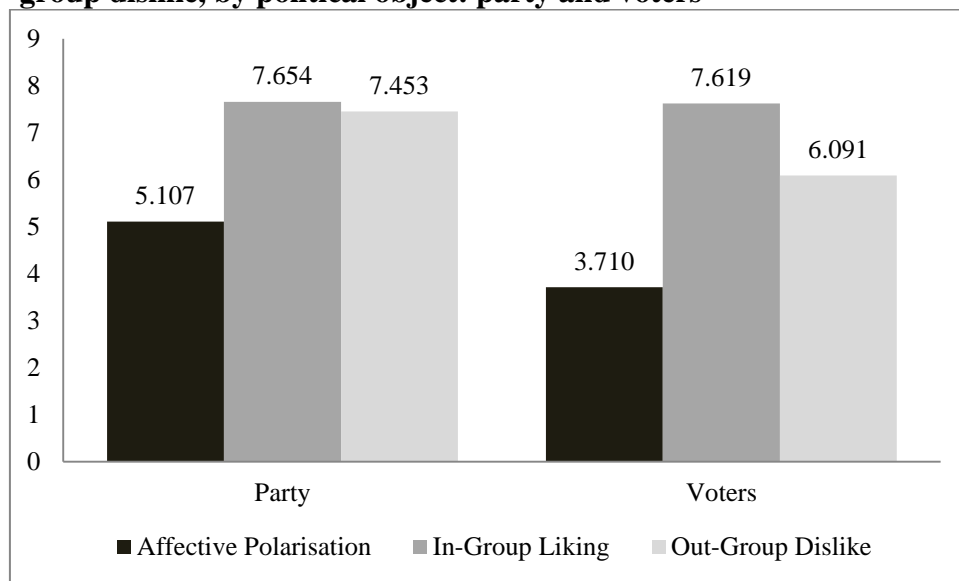
Different control variables at the respondent level, which are plausibly correlated with both affective polarisation and social sorting based on previous literature, are selected: party identification, ideological groups, political interest and basic sociodemographic variables (sex, age groups and education level) (for more detailed information on control variables, see the Appendix). Basic descriptive statistics of the main variables are included in the Appendix (Table A1).

2.4. Results

First of all, it is interesting to compare the polarisation of feelings for parties and their voters in Spain. Figure 1 shows that the average like score for the in-party (7.654) was very similar to the average like score for the voters of their own party (7.619). However, and in line with previous findings, another picture emerges when evaluations of out-parties and their voters are compared. The out-group dislike was obtained by calculating the respondent’s mean negative feelings towards his/her out-groups, weighting each out-group by its size (that is, the proportion of votes obtained in the April 2019 general elections). As observed in Figure 1, Spanish respondents, on average, evaluated the other parties much worse than their supporters; specifically, the average out-party dislike (7.453) was approximately 1.36 points higher than the average out-voters dislike (6.091). As a result, the average affective polarisation (that is, the difference between in-group like and out-group like) was approximately 1.40 points higher for parties

(5.107) than for partisans (3.710). At the respondent level, the correlation between the polarisation of feelings about parties and partisans is far from perfect ($r=0.59$). Therefore, the data provide further evidence for the case of Spain, in addition to that of the U.S. (Druckman and Levendusky 2019; Kingzette 2021) and the Netherlands (Harteveld 2021a), that people tend to evaluate the parties worse than their rank-and-file supporters.

Figure 1. Mean levels of affective polarisation, in-group like and out-group dislike, by political object: party and voters

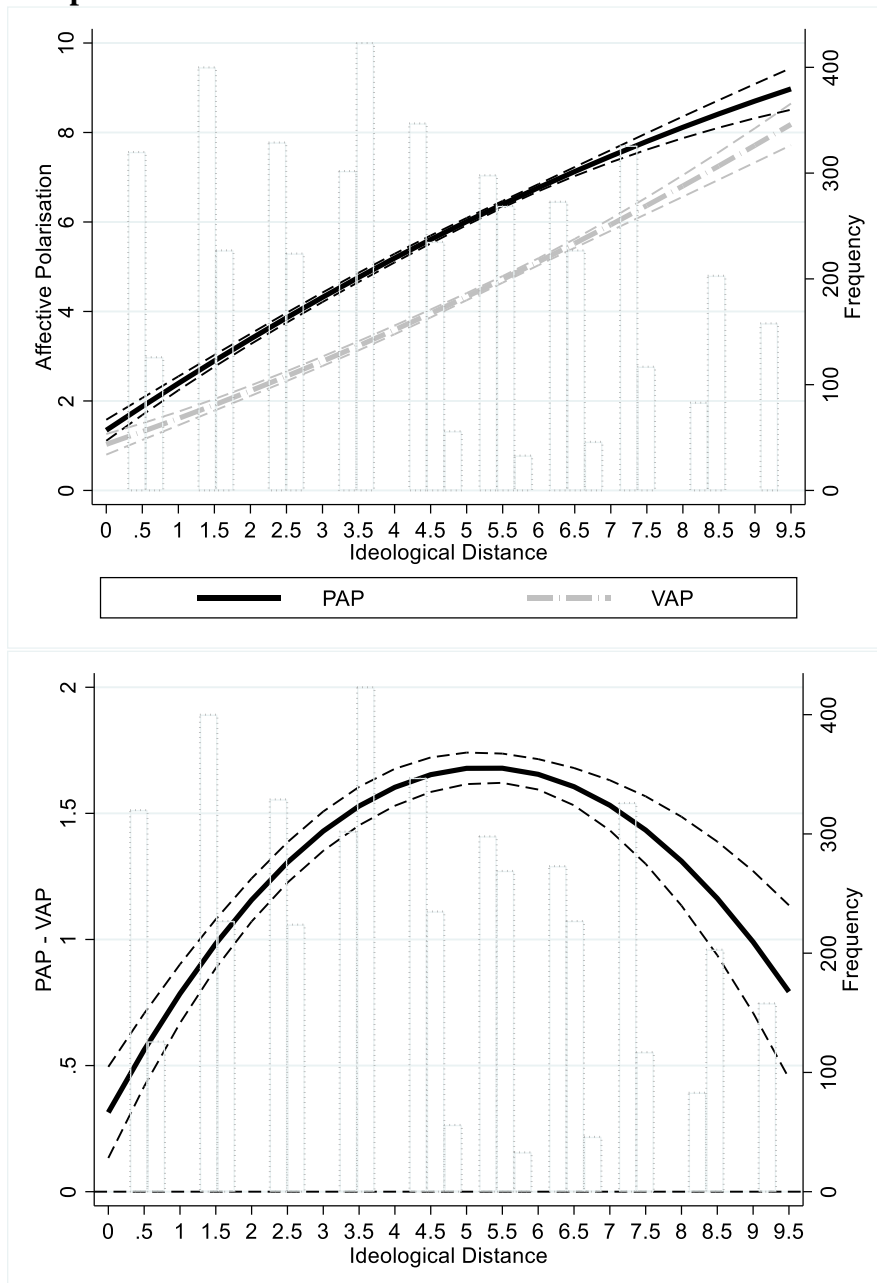


Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Turning to the hypotheses, I stack the dataset by out-party, so that each respondent appears once for each out-party she evaluated. To test H1a and H1b, I perform three different linear regression models with, respectively, PAP, VAP and PAP-VAP as the dependent variables. Ideological distance and ideological distance squared are the key independent variables. Dummies for each out-party (with VOX as the reference category) are also included to control for the fact that some of them may attract more hostility than others. Given that I am not interested in analysing the effect of any variable at the respondent level for testing H1a and H1b, I include respondent fixed effects in the main models. In this way, the models control for between-respondent factors, and the effects of ideological distance between respondents and their out-parties

on the dependent variables are explored with within-respondents. Finally, standard errors are clustered by respondent.

Figure 2. Within-respondent predicted levels of party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP, by ideological distance between respondents and out-parties



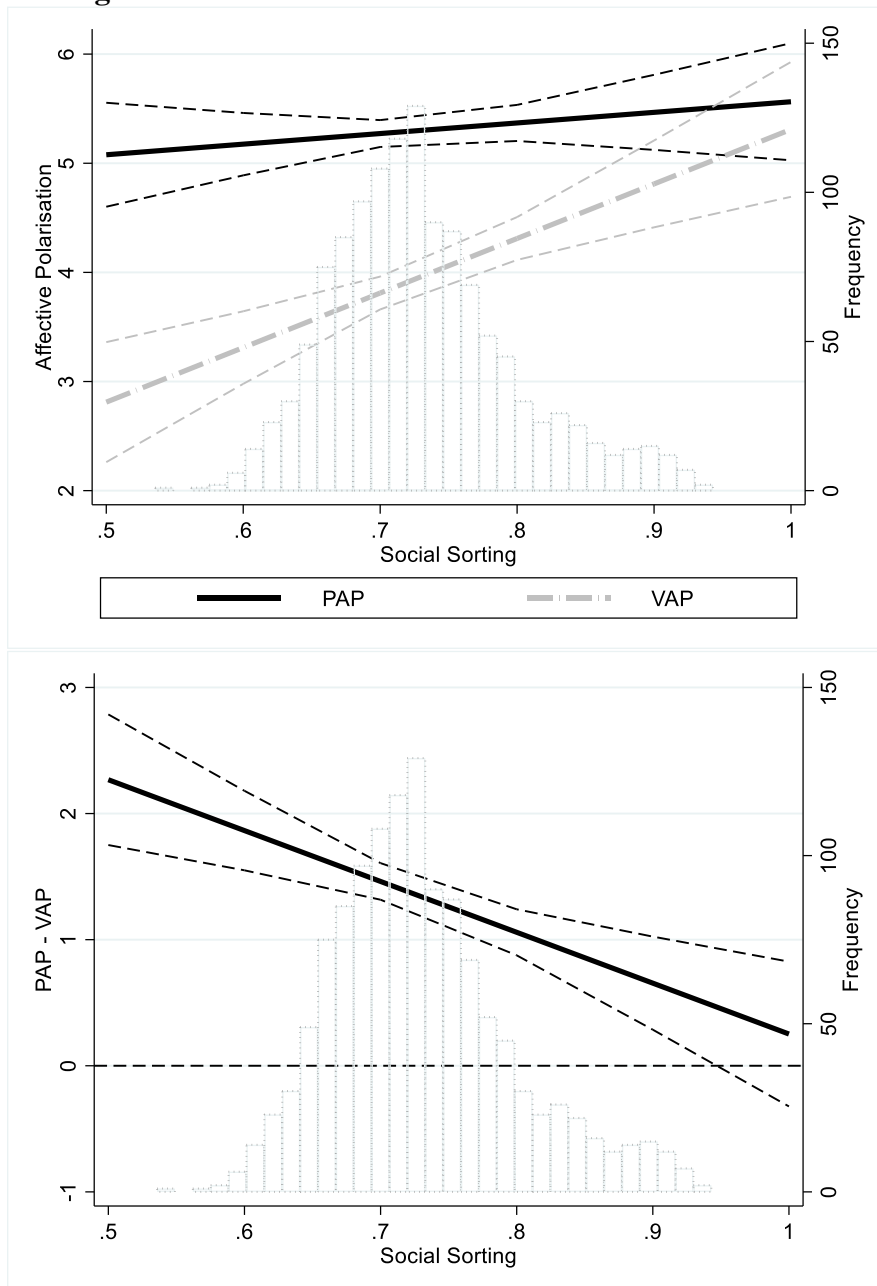
Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2 and 3 in Table A2.
Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Figure 2 graphically represents the within-respondent predicted levels of PAP, VAP and PAP-VAP by different levels of ideological distance (see Table A2 in the Appendix for the regression results). The results confirm H1a and H1b. As it is observed in the top graph, the affective distance between their own party and the evaluated out-party strongly increases with ideological distance. Interestingly, the relationship exhibits significant diminishing returns. By contrast, and congruent with the expectations, VAP follows a significant positive quadratic relationship with ideological distance: the difference between positive feelings towards copartisans and partisans of the other party increases with ideological distance in an increasingly strong way.

Consequently, and as is shown in the bottom graph of Figure 2, the gap between PAP and VAP significantly increases until intermediate levels of ideological distance, to decrease again when the distance becomes larger. For example, PAP is predicted to be approximately 0.56 points higher than VAP when the ideological distance between the respondent and the evaluated out-party is only 0.5 points; when the evaluated out-party is 5 points away from the respondent, however, the gap between PAP and VAP reaches 1.68 points; finally, the difference between PAP and VAP decreases to 0.99 points when the ideological distance is 9 points. Hence, the results suggest that hostility towards out-groups are much more focused on parties than on their voters when ideological discrepancies are moderate, but that the negative evaluations extend to partisans to a greater degree when the ideological differences are high.

Regarding the out-party dummies included in the models, the results interestingly show that the hostility attracted by the radical right party VOX spills over onto its voters to a greater degree than the antipathy attracted by the other parties (see Figure A1 in the Appendix). When the out-party is not VOX, the PAP-VAP gap ranges from 1.68 (PSOE) to 1.28 (Cs) points, and the affective distance between their own party and VOX is only 0.99 points higher than the affective distance between copartisans and VOX supporters. This finding is consistent with the fact that the nativist and exclusionary positions defended by radical right parties attract the highest levels of negative partisanship among the electorate (e.g. Meléndez and Kaltwasser 2021), and are similar to the results obtained by Hartevelde (2021a) for the Dutch case.

Figure 3. Predicted levels of party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP, by social sorting



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2 and 3 in Table A3.
Source: E-DEM, third wave.

To test H2, which refers to social sorting, I need to introduce independent variables at the level of respondents. Consequently, I conduct linear random intercept models with respondent-out-parties nested in respondents. The dependent variables are the same as before (PAP, VAP, PAP-VAP), and the key independent variable is social sorting. The different control variables described above, measured at the respondent level, are

introduced in the models, together with ideological distance and ideological distance squared at the respondent–out-party level. Out-party dummies are also included. Standard errors are clustered by respondent.

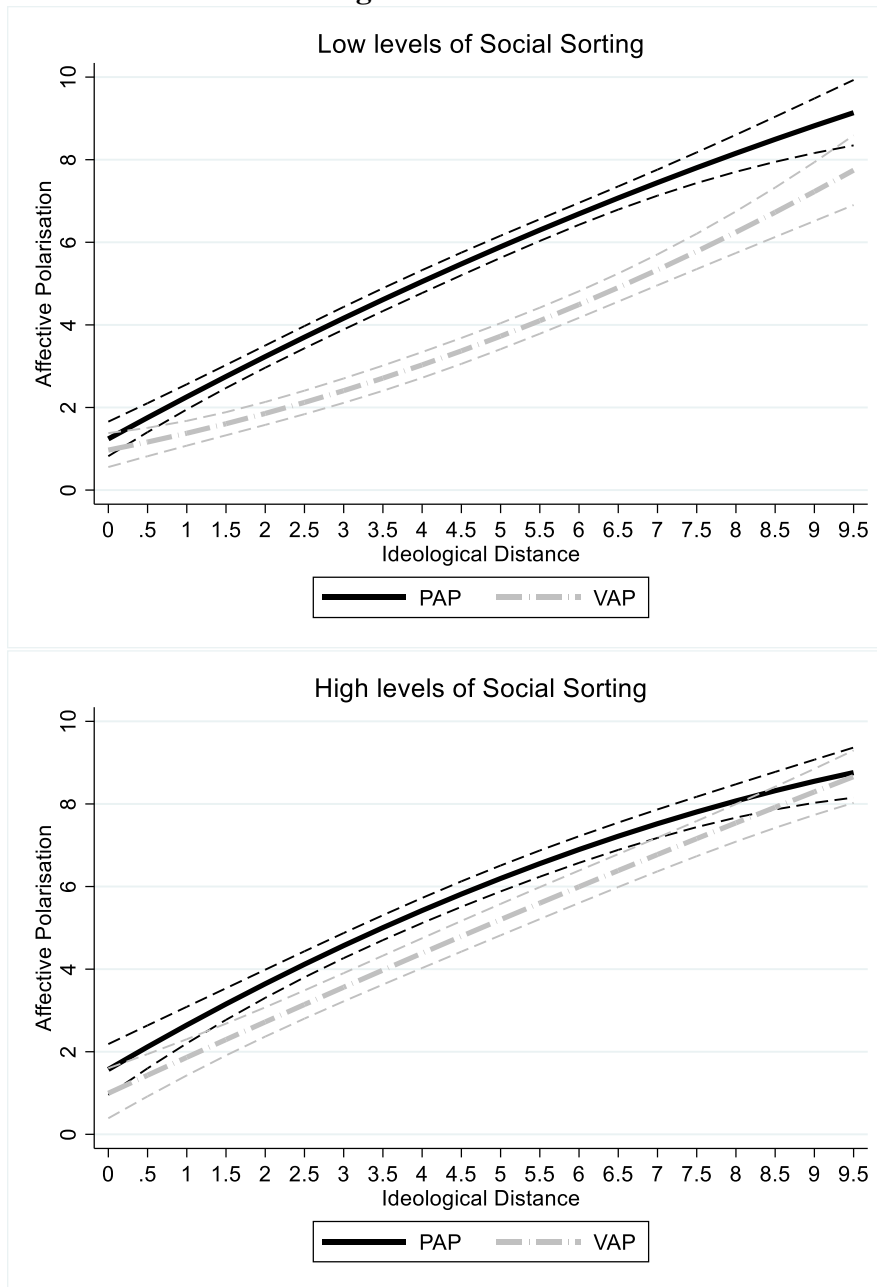
Figure 3 graphically represents the predicted levels of PAP, VAP and PAP-VAP by levels of social sorting (see Table A3 in the Appendix for the regression results). As can be observed in the top graph, PAP seems to increase with social sorting, although the positive relationship is very weak and insignificant. If control variables are considered, PAP appears to be mainly fuelled by other factors, particularly ideological distance and party identification. In contrast, social sorting is strongly and significantly associated with VAP. Whereas those respondents with low levels of social sorting (who are located in the fifth percentile in the social sorting scale) have a predicted difference between their feelings towards copartisans and out-partisans of 3.48 points, socially sorted respondents (those who are located at the 95th percentile in the social sorting scale) have a predicted VAP of 4.63 points. Consequently, and as shown in the bottom graph, the gap between PAP and VAP significantly decreases with social sorting: whereas PAP is predicted to be approximately 1.73 points higher than VAP among respondents with low levels of social sorting, this difference is only 0.80 points among socially sorted respondents. The results, therefore, support H2.

It is also worth noting that these multilevel models also support H1a and H1b (see Figure A2 in the Appendix), so that the results presented in Figure 2 are robust to an alternative model specification.

The moderating effect of social sorting on the relationship between ideological distance and the PAP-VAP gap, established in H3, is explored by conducting a three-way interaction between ideological distance, ideological distance squared and social sorting, that is, I introduce two interaction terms—‘ideological distance x social sorting’ and ‘ideological distance squared x social sorting’—to the previous multilevel model. Figure 4 displays the predicted levels of PAP and VAP across different levels of ideological distance for those respondents who present poor social sorting (that is, who are located at the fifth percentile in the social sorting scale, as shown in the top graph) and those who are highly socially sorted (who are located at the 95th percentile, as shown in the bottom graph) (see Models 1 and 2 in Table A4 in the Appendix). Congruent with expectations, the positive quadratic relationship between ideological

distance and VAP is only present among poorly sorted respondents, whereas ideology is linearly associated with VAP among socially sorted respondents. On the other hand, the relationship between ideological distance and PAP does not appear to be substantially conditioned by social sorting.

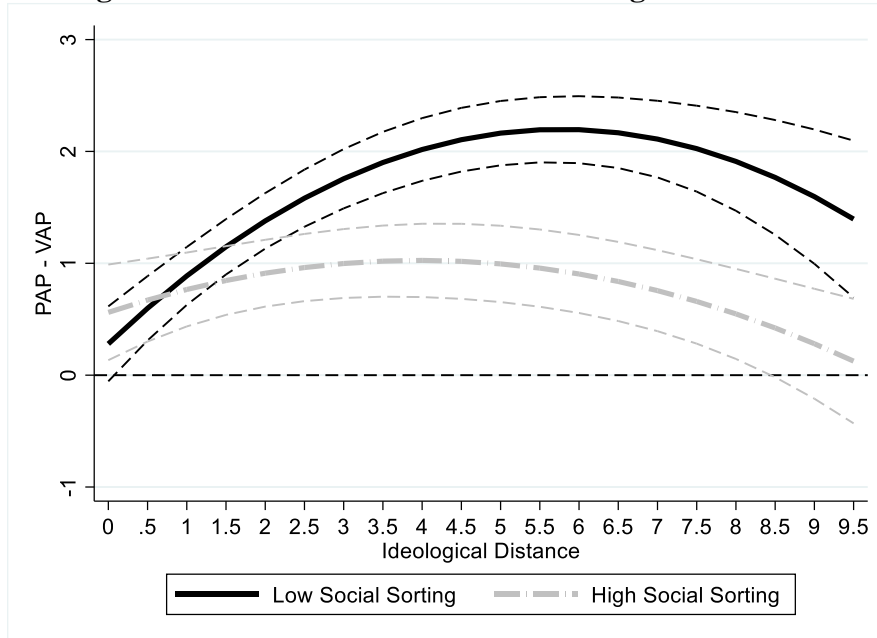
Figure 4. Predicted levels of party affective polarisation (PAP) and voter affective polarisation (VAP) by ideological distance and levels of social sorting



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1 and 2 in Table A4.
Source: E-DEM, third wave.

I also graphically represent the predicted difference between PAP and VAP by ideological distance and social sorting in Figure 5 (see Model 3 in Table A4 in the Appendix). The results show that the PAP-VAP gap for intermediate levels of ideological distance is significantly lower when the levels of social sorting are high. For example, when the distance between an individual and an out-party is 5 points, PAP is approximately 2.16 points higher than VAP among less socially sorted respondents, while this difference is of only 0.99 points among the most sorted respondents. To put it in a more substantive way, the results suggest that those citizens whose social identities are aligned along party lines tend to expand their out-party hostility to the ordinary voters who belong to that party, even if the ideological distance is moderate. The graph also shows that the PAP-VAP gap diminishes with high levels of ideological distance among poorly socially sorted respondents, although it continues to be higher than among the most socially sorted.

Figure 5. Predicted difference between party affective polarisation and voter affective polarisation (PAP-VAP) by ideological distance and levels of social sorting



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Model 3 in Table A4.
Source: E-DEM, third wave.

2.4.1. Robustness checks

Some robustness checks have been implemented. First, I check that the results obtained for H1a and H1b are robust to an alternative measure of parties' ideological position. Concretely, I take advantage of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey to obtain each party's position on a 0–10 left-right ideological scale and calculate an alternative ideological distance measure. The correlation between the two ideological distance scales is very high ($r = 0.99$) and the results are basically the same (see Table A5 and Figure A3 in the Appendix).

Second, I have retested H1a and H1b by measuring ideological distance with an ordinal variable. Specifically, I have grouped the values of the ideological distance scale into the following nine ordered categories: (0-1], (1-2], (2-3], (3-4], (4-5], (5-6], (6-7], (7-8] and (8-9.3]. Dummies for each category of ideological distance (with the first, '(0-1]', as the reference category) are included in the models as key independent variables rather than the ideological distance scale and the ideological distance scale squared. The results are similar to those of the main models and are congruent with theoretical expectations (see Table A6 and Figure A4 in the Appendix).

Third, I have estimated social sorting using a slightly different procedure. For each party, I estimated a logit model for which I predicted the probability that the party was the preferred one (that is, the in-party) by the same set of sociodemographic and identity-related variables described above. I then assigned to each respondent the probability that she supported her in-party. The greater the probability (that is, closer to 1), the more socially sorted is the respondent. This new variable and the variable used in the main analysis correlate very strong ($r = 0.94$) and the results remain fundamentally unaltered (see Tables A7 and A8, and Figures A5–A7, in the Appendix).

Fourth, I estimated social sorting only using sociodemographic variables (sex, age, education, income, involvement with labour unions, religion, church attendance and region). In this way, I checked whether the previous results are mainly driven by the subjective measures of territorial identity (and economic uncertainty) included in the calculation of the main social sorting variable. The new variable correlates with the one used in the main analysis quite strongly ($r = 0.80$). The results with this social sorting variable continue to support H2, although the strength of the effect is a bit weaker, and

are in the direction expected by H3, albeit the interaction effects lose significance (see Tables A9 and A10 and Figures A8–A10, in the Appendix).

2.5. Conclusions

This paper contributes to the comparative literature on affective polarisation by exploring some factors that account for the gap between PAP and VAP. Specifically, I analyse whether the ideological distance between citizens and their out-parties, as well as the alignment of social identities along party lines (social sorting), predicts the extent to which citizens extend their polarised feelings about parties to ordinary voters. This is explored in the case of Spain, a country that presents high levels of both ideological and affective polarisation and is characterised by a number of relevant political and social cleavages.

The empirical results show, first, that when the ideological distance between an individual and an evaluated out-party is intermediate, the affective distance between the in-partisan like and out-partisan like remains modest and much weaker than the affective distance between the in-party like and out-party like. Only when the ideological distance begins to be high are the negative feelings towards out-parties extended to a greater degree to their members, significantly decreasing the PAP-VAP gap. Second, the empirical results show that individuals with low levels of social sorting (that is, respondents whose party preferences are poorly predicted by sociodemographic and identity-related variables capturing the main social cleavages) hold much higher levels of PAP than of VAP, whereas socially sorted Spaniards are much more polarised in their feelings towards voters, reaching levels similar to those of party affective polarisation. Finally, the empirical analysis suggests that socially sorted individuals, compared to those with more cross-cutting identities, tend to extend their negative evaluations of out-parties to ordinary voters even when out-parties are only moderately distant from them in ideological terms.

An interesting additional finding is that the negative feelings attracted by the radical right VOX spread to its rank-and-file supporters to a greater degree than negative sentiments attracted by the other Spanish political parties, even controlling for ideological distance. This result, in line with that obtained by Hartevelde (2021a) in the

Netherlands, is congruent with the social stigma associated with radical right parties found in most Western European countries due to their extreme and exclusionary ideologies (Harteveld et al. 2019; Meléndez and Kaltwasser 2021).

The containment of ideological polarisation within intermediate levels, as well as the preservation of cross-cutting social and political identities among the population, appears to be crucial to preventing political resentment from spreading beyond political parties and spilling over to rank-and-file supporters. This is relevant in light of the disturbing social and political consequences of political polarisation when it takes the form of increasing hostility between ordinary citizens who belong to different political poles (e.g. McCoy et al. 2018; McCoy and Somer 2019). Ideology can be understood as a social and political identity that is not necessarily rooted in a coherent set of opinions on different policy issues; in this sense, some studies show that citizens are increasingly divided not so much by disagreements over concrete issues, but mainly in identity terms (e.g. Mason 2018b). Placing more emphasis on specific issues in political debates and leaving aside the more purely identitarian ideological discussions might help preserve the benefits usually associated with polarisation (e.g. clarification of the different political positions, higher levels of political participation) at the same time that hostility between partisans is contained (e.g. Miller 2020). In addition, the emphasis on those values and interests widely shared in society, the will of political elites to cooperate in some crucial and strategic issues and, generally, the strengthening of social and political plurality may be relevant factors to preserve certain levels of cross-cutting identities of the population (e.g. Mason 2018a).

This paper has some relevant limitations. First, the social sorting measure, although a good proxy of this phenomenon (Harteveld 2021b), has different relevant caveats already mentioned above. Thus, future comparative research should develop more robust and precise indices, including variables that directly measure the different sets of salient social identities as well as the extent to which respondents are aware of how these different social identities are aligned with party affiliations. Second, the present analysis is restricted to the Spanish context, raising questions about the external validity of the results. In this sense, there are some similarities between the findings obtained in the present paper for Spain and those obtained by Harteveld (2021a) for the Netherlands, a country characterised by much lower levels of affective polarisation and some relevant differences regarding societal divides. Third, some of the cross-sectional

relationships explored above can be analysed in greater detail using a panel data structure. For example, the causal direction of the relationship between social sorting and the polarisation of feelings about voters could be explored (see Robison and Moskowitz 2019). Finally, we need to better understand the factors driving social sorting, as well as its social and political consequences.

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Appendix

1- Independent variables for measuring social sorting

Sex. 1 means female and 0 means male.

Age. I have created five dummies, each of which refers to a different age group: 18-24; 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55 or more.

Education level. I have created three dummies, each of which refers to a different education group: lower secondary or less; upper secondary or 3 years Bachelor; 5 years Bachelor or higher.

Income. Total household income after taxes (monthly), with ten categories: 780€ or less; 781€-1000€; 1001€-1250€; 1251€-1500€; 1501€-1800€; 1801€-2200€; 2201€-2500€; 2501€-2850€; 2851€-3700€; 3701€ or more.

Economic uncertainty. I have created an index obtained through the average of four items which measure the respondent's concern about: 1) bills, 2) reducing lifestyle, 3) getting a job, and 4) loans and mortgages. Each item contains four categories: not at all concerned; barely concerned; quite concerned; very much concerned.

Involvement with labour unions. I have created a dummy variable whose value 1 refers to those respondents who have some kind of involvement with labour unions and 0 refers to those who do not have any relationship with them. This variable is based on four items that ask respondents if they: 1) belong to a labour union; 2) took part in activities of a labour union; 3) donated to a labour union; and 4) volunteered in a labour union. Respondents who have answered "yes" in at least one of the four items are classified in the category 1 of the new variable, while the rest are classified in 0.

Religious membership. I have created three dummies, each of which refers to a different religious group: Roman Catholic; other religion; no religion.

Church attendance. Frequency of church attendance, with seven categories: never; only occasionally; only on special holidays; at least once a month; once a week; more than once a week; every day.

Region. I have created a dummy variable for each autonomous community.

Identification with region. Identification with region or autonomous community where respondent lives. Eleven-point scale ranging from 0 (do not identify at all) to 10 (identify strongly).

Identification with Spain. Eleven-point scale ranging from 0 (do not identify at all) to 10 (identify strongly).

2- Control variables at the respondent level

Party identification. I have created the variable using two survey questions: a first question about whether the respondent feels closest to a particular party, and a second question about the respondent's degree of closeness to that political party. The resulting variable has four categories: no party identification; not close to the party; quite close to the party; very close to the party. The variables is rescaled to range from 0 (no party identification) to 1 (very close to the party).

Ideological groups. Based on the eleven-point ideological self-placement scale, I have created five dummies, each of which refers to an ideological group: left (0-2); center-left (3-4); center (5); center-right (6-7); right (8-10).

Political interest. Degree of political interest, with four categories; 1) not at all interested, 2) hardly interested, 3) quite interested, and 4) very interested. The variable is rescaled to range from 0 (no at all interested) to 1 (very interested).

Sex. 1 means female and 0 means male.

Age. I have created five dummies, each of which refers to a different age group: 18-24; 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55 or more.

Education level. I have created three dummies, each of which refers to a different education group: lower secondary or less; upper secondary or 3 years Bachelor; 5 years Bachelor or higher.

3- Descriptive statistics

Table A1. Descriptive statistics

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<i>Respondent-out party level</i>					
Party Affective Polarisation (PAP)	5022	5.300	3.299	-9	10
Voter Affective Polarisation (VAP)	5022	3.958	3.563	-10	10
PAP-VAP	5022	1.342	2.750	-12.5	16
Ideological Distance	5022	4.337	2.454	0.303	9.320
Ideological Distance Squared	5022	24.833	23.235	0.092	86.863
<i>Respondent level</i>					
Social Sorting	1260	0.730	0.067	0.536	0.943
Party Identification	1260	0.453	0.366	0	1
Ideology: Left	1260	0.330	-	0	1
Ideology: Centre-Left	1260	0.260	-	0	1
Ideology: Centre	1260	0.150	-	0	1
Ideology: Centre-Right	1260	0.149	-	0	1
Ideology: Right	1260	0.110	-	0	1
Political Interest	1260	0.609	0.250	0	1
Female	1260	0.455	-	0	1
Age: 18-24	1260	0.075	-	0	1
Age: 25-34	1260	0.177	-	0	1
Age: 35-44	1260	0.226	-	0	1
Age: 45-54	1260	0.232	-	0	1
Age: 55 or more	1260	0.291	-	0	1
Education: Lower secondary or less	1260	0.138	-	0	1
Education: Upper secondary	1260	0.437	-	0	1
Education: Bachelor or more	1260	0.425	-	0	1

Source: E-DEM, third wave.

4- Main results

Table A2. Linear regression models with respondent fixed effects. Party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP as dependent variables

VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: VAP	M3: PAP-VAP
Ideological Distance	1.077** (0.064)	0.557** (0.063)	0.520** (0.049)
Ideological Distance Squared	-0.029** (0.008)	0.021** (0.008)	-0.049** (0.006)
PP	-0.185** (0.070)	-0.646** (0.073)	0.461** (0.075)
PSOE	0.498** (0.141)	-0.198 (0.135)	0.695** (0.105)
UP	0.276* (0.118)	-0.140 (0.119)	0.416** (0.091)
Cs	-0.109 (0.105)	-0.403** (0.100)	0.294** (0.090)
Constant	1.273** (0.153)	1.316** (0.149)	-0.043 (0.112)
Number of respondent - out-party	5022	5022	5022
Number of respondents	1260	1260	1260
R-squared (within)	0.479	0.448	0.055

Notes: Respondent fixed effects included. Standard errors are clustered by respondent. Cells report coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Table A3. Linear random intercept models. Party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP as dependent variables

VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: VAP	M3: PAP-VAP
<i>Respondent - out-party level</i>			
Ideological Distance	1.090** (0.062)	0.571** (0.062)	0.515** (0.049)
Ideological Distance Squared	-0.031** (0.007)	0.018* (0.008)	-0.049** (0.006)
<i>Respondent level</i>			
Social Sorting	0.972 (1.012)	4.999** (1.163)	-4.033** (1.086)
Party Identification	2.034** (0.179)	1.759** (0.215)	0.275 (0.209)
Ideology: Left	-0.561** (0.211)	-0.314 (0.245)	-0.254 (0.236)
Ideology: Center-left	-0.252 (0.179)	-0.014 (0.222)	-0.241 (0.224)

Ideology: Center-right	-0.400*	-0.081	-0.320
	(0.195)	(0.242)	(0.244)
Ideology: Right	0.012	0.438	-0.430
	(0.239)	(0.279)	(0.285)
Political Interest	0.008	0.527+	-0.522
	(0.251)	(0.299)	(0.329)
Female	-0.062	-0.137	0.074
	(0.114)	(0.139)	(0.135)
Age: 25-34	0.021	0.030	-0.010
	(0.231)	(0.297)	(0.305)
Age: 35-44	0.099	-0.279	0.377
	(0.231)	(0.295)	(0.309)
Age: 45-54	0.297	0.290	0.005
	(0.225)	(0.288)	(0.306)
Age: 55 or more	0.268	0.102	0.163
	(0.231)	(0.294)	(0.306)
Education: Upper Secondary	-0.439*	-0.485*	0.046
	(0.179)	(0.221)	(0.208)
Education: Bachelor or more	-0.404*	-0.284	-0.121
	(0.183)	(0.224)	(0.215)
PP	-0.170*	-0.640**	0.464**
	(0.069)	(0.073)	(0.074)
PSOE	0.494**	-0.206	0.700**
	(0.137)	(0.132)	(0.103)
UP	0.258*	-0.156	0.420**
	(0.117)	(0.118)	(0.090)
Cs	-0.109	-0.389**	0.281**
	(0.101)	(0.098)	(0.089)
Constant	0.161	-3.029**	3.203**
	(0.795)	(0.943)	(0.884)
<i>Variance components</i>			
Random intercept b/w respondents	2.465**	4.435**	4.219**
Random intercept b/w respondent - out-party	3.994**	3.884**	3.058**
<hr/>			
Number of respondents	1260	1260	1260
Number of respondent - out-party	5022	5022	5022
Log likelihood	-11384.632	-11612.547	-11111.442
Wald chi2(20)	3089.13**	2669.54**	247.25**

Notes: Standard errors are clustered by respondent. Cells report coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses.
** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Table A4. Linear random intercept models. Party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP as dependent variables

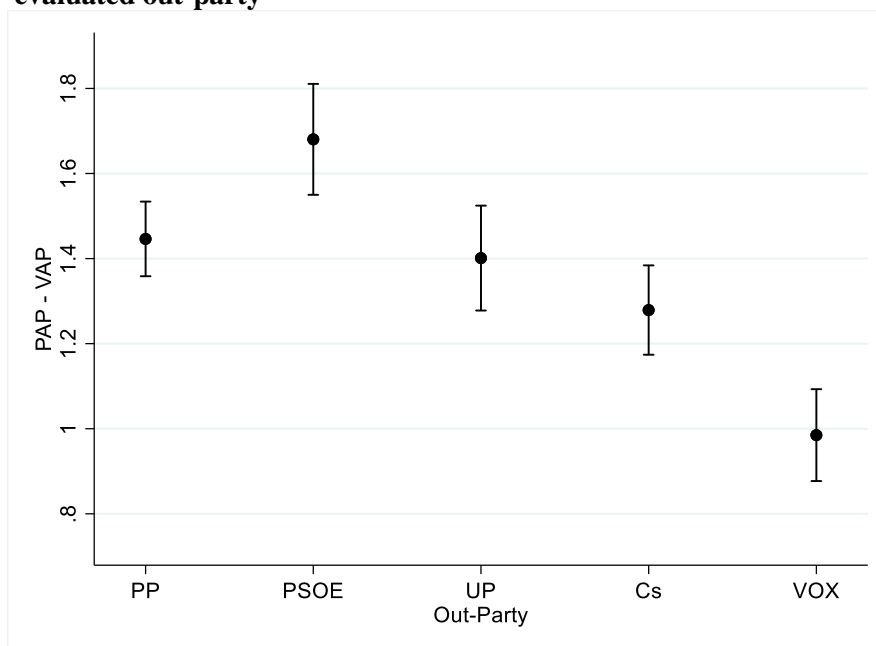
VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: VAP	M3: PAP-VAP
Ideological Distance	0.844 (0.627)	-1.027 (0.660)	1.855** (0.502)
Ideological Distance Squared	0.020 (0.068)	0.156* (0.070)	-0.135* (0.056)
Social Sorting	1.448 (1.968)	0.113 (1.966)	1.226 (1.473)
Ideol. Dist. X Social Sorting	0.310 (0.845)	2.206* (0.892)	-1.877** (0.673)
Ideol. Dist. Sq. X Social Sorting	-0.067 (0.089)	-0.189* (0.092)	0.123+ (0.074)
Party Identification	2.025** (0.179)	1.759** (0.214)	0.266 (0.209)
Ideology: Left	-0.582** (0.213)	-0.330 (0.247)	-0.256 (0.236)
Ideology: Center-left	-0.276 (0.181)	-0.009 (0.223)	-0.268 (0.224)
Ideology: Center-right	-0.398* (0.195)	-0.090 (0.241)	-0.309 (0.244)
Ideology: Right	-0.015 (0.244)	0.414 (0.283)	-0.433 (0.286)
Political Interest	0.026 (0.252)	0.525+ (0.298)	-0.503 (0.328)
Female	-0.065 (0.114)	-0.135 (0.139)	0.070 (0.135)
Age: 25-34	0.022 (0.231)	0.037 (0.297)	-0.017 (0.305)
Age: 35-44	0.099 (0.231)	-0.274 (0.295)	0.372 (0.309)
Age: 45-54	0.292 (0.224)	0.296 (0.288)	-0.005 (0.306)
Age: 55 or more	0.265 (0.230)	0.109 (0.294)	0.154 (0.306)
Education: Upper Secondary	-0.437* (0.179)	-0.487* (0.221)	0.049 (0.208)
Education: Bachelor or more	-0.401* (0.183)	-0.284 (0.224)	-0.118 (0.214)
PP	-0.170* (0.069)	-0.647** (0.072)	0.471** (0.074)
PSOE	0.466** (0.144)	-0.139 (0.140)	0.606** (0.104)
UP	0.238+ (0.122)	-0.116 (0.123)	0.361** (0.092)
Cs	-0.111	-0.415**	0.304**

	(0.101)	(0.097)	(0.089)
Constant	-0.132	0.481	-0.527
	(1.440)	(1.496)	(1.151)
<i>Variance components</i>			
Random intercept b/w respondents	2.462**	4.440**	4.216**
Random intercept b/w respondent - out-party	3.992**	3.870**	3.041**
<hr/>			
Number of respondents	1260	1260	1260
Number of respondent - out-party	5022	5022	5022
Log likelihood	-11383.102	-11605.975	-11100.114
Wald chi2(22)	3156.22**	2821.66**	259.12**

Notes: Standard errors are clustered by respondent. Cells report coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses.
 ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

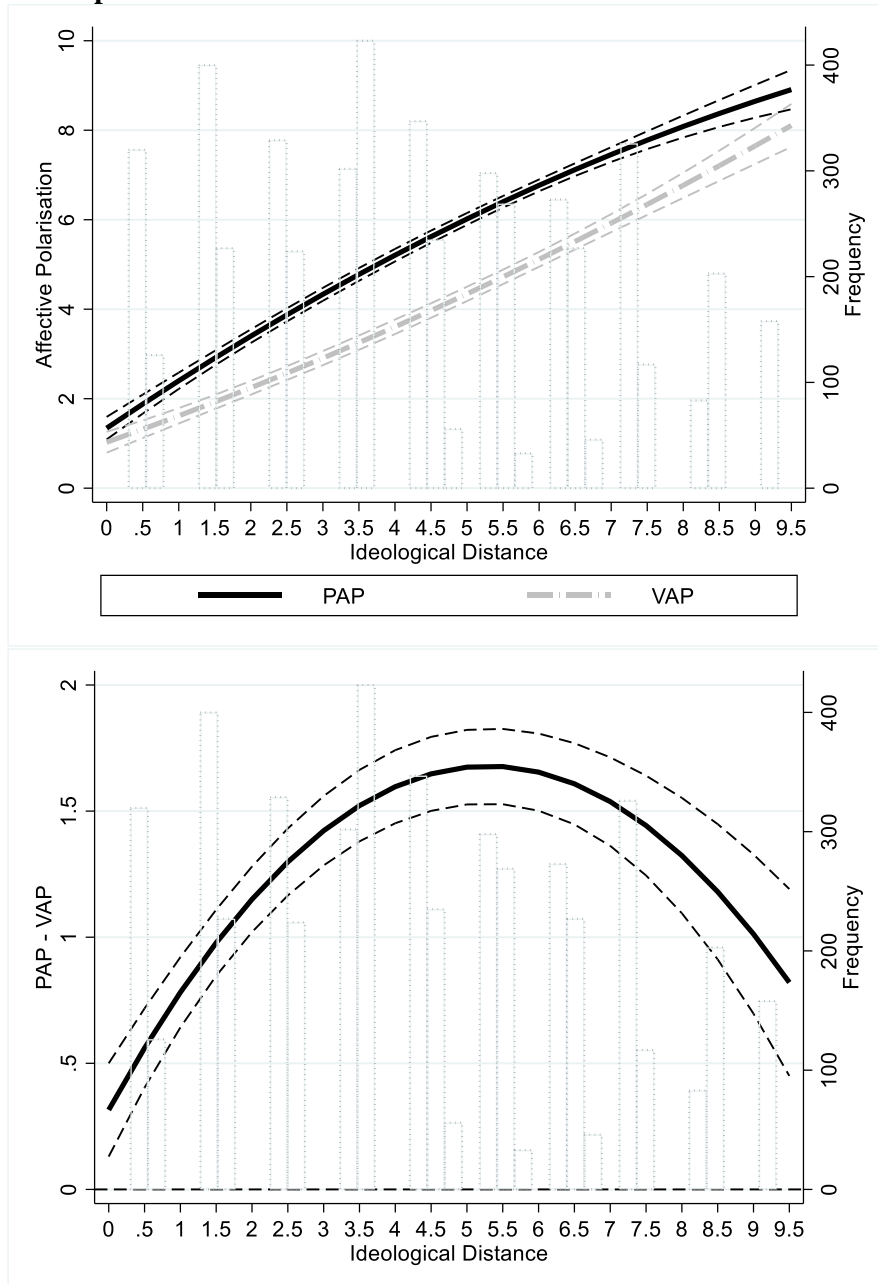
Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Figure A1. Within-respondent predicted difference between party affective polarisation and voter affective polarisation (PAP-VAP) by evaluated out-party



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Model 3 in Table A2.
 Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Figure A2. Predicted levels of party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP, by ideological distance between respondents and out-parties. Linear random intercept models



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2 and 3 in Table A3.
Source: E-DEM, third wave.

5- Robustness checks

A) Alternative measure of ideological distance (CHES)

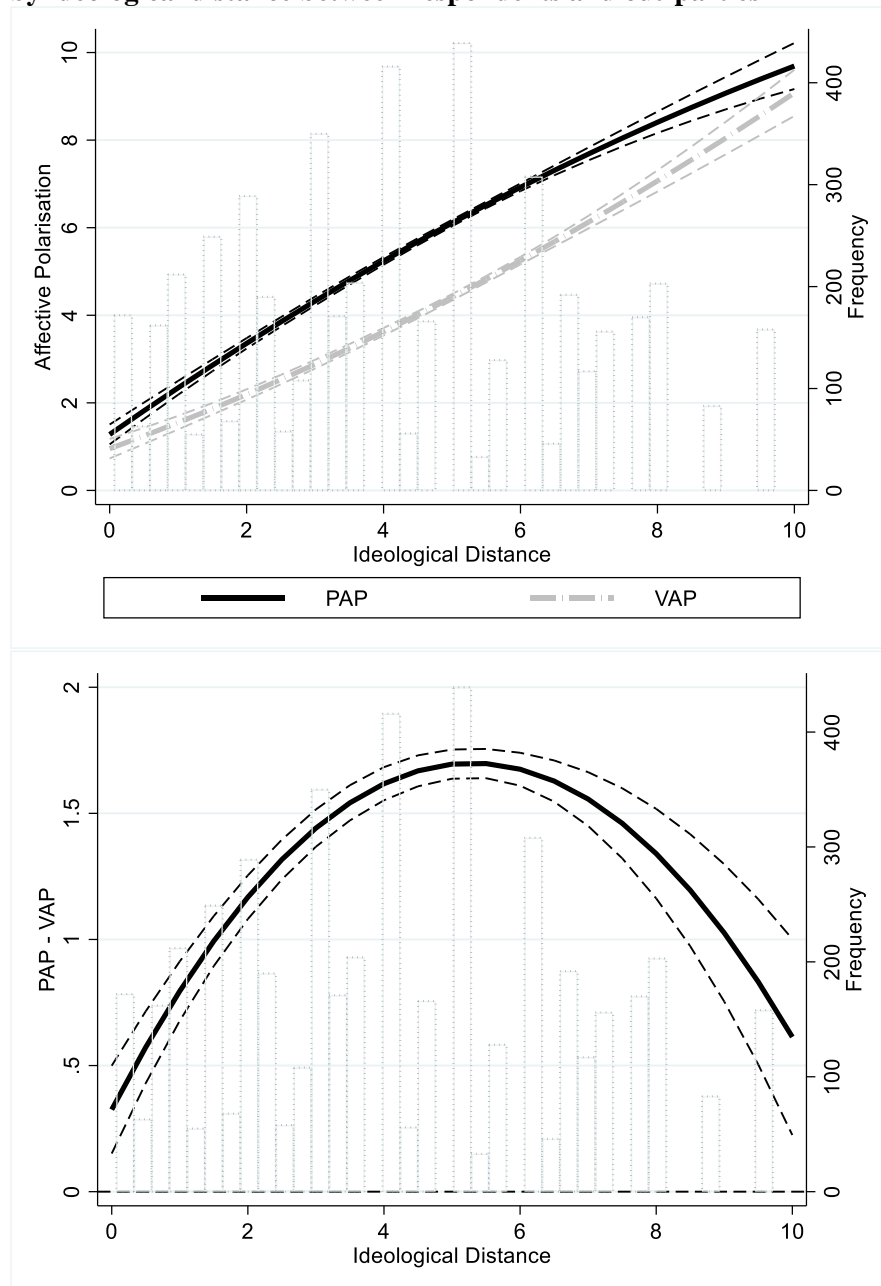
Table A5. Linear regression models with respondent fixed effects. Party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP - VAP as dependent variables

VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: VAP	M3: PAP-VAP
Ideological Distance	1.090**	0.571**	0.519**
	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.044)
Ideological Distance Squared	-0.025**	0.024**	-0.049**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.005)
PP	0.515**	0.082	0.434**
	(0.090)	(0.090)	(0.085)
PSOE	0.999**	0.321*	0.678**
	(0.157)	(0.149)	(0.114)
UP	0.946**	0.517**	0.429**
	(0.131)	(0.131)	(0.097)
Cs	0.395**	0.115	0.279**
	(0.120)	(0.113)	(0.097)
Constant	0.744**	0.766**	-0.022
	(0.166)	(0.161)	(0.120)
Number of respondent - out-party	5022	5022	5022
Number of respondents	1260	1260	1260
R-squared (within)	0.478	0.446	0.062

Notes: Respondent fixed effects included. Standard errors are clustered by respondent. Cells report coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Figure A3. Within-respondent predicted levels of party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP, by ideological distance between respondents and out-parties



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2 and 3 in Table A5.
Source: E-DEM, third wave.

B) Alternative specification of ideological distance (ordinal variable)

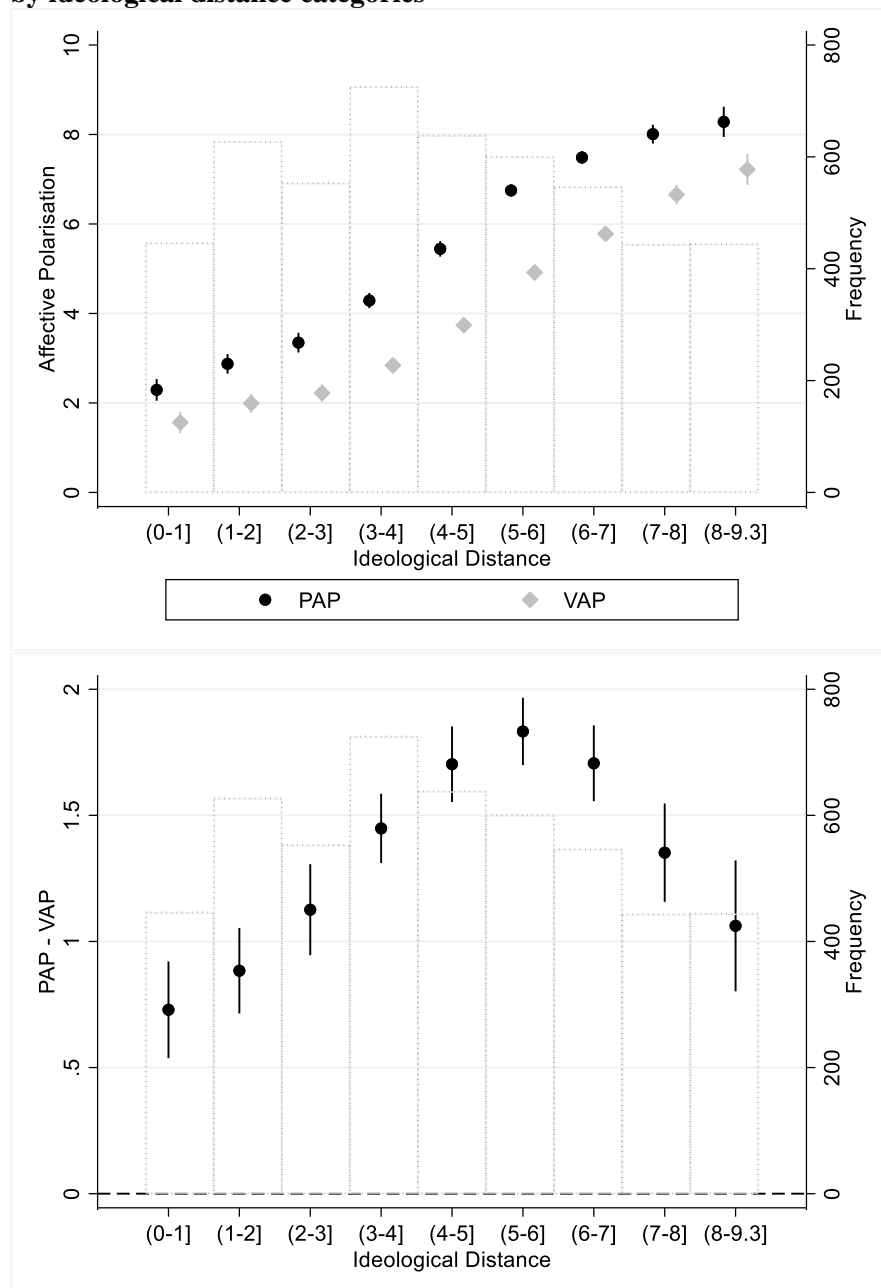
Table A6. Linear regression models with respondent fixed effects. Party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP - VAP as dependent variables

VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: VAP	M3: PAP-VAP
Ideological Distance: (1-2]	0.582** (0.156)	0.428** (0.154)	0.155 (0.129)
Ideological Distance: (2-3]	1.056** (0.167)	0.659** (0.153)	0.397** (0.135)
Ideological Distance: (3-4]	1.996** (0.158)	1.277** (0.151)	0.719** (0.128)
Ideological Distance: (4-5]	3.152** (0.157)	2.178** (0.152)	0.974** (0.125)
Ideological Distance: (5-6]	4.457** (0.152)	3.354** (0.156)	1.104** (0.123)
Ideological Distance: (6-7]	5.194** (0.159)	4.216** (0.165)	0.977** (0.136)
Ideological Distance: (7-8]	5.716** (0.185)	5.093** (0.186)	0.623** (0.155)
Ideological Distance: (8-9.3]	5.990** (0.239)	5.657** (0.237)	0.333+ (0.184)
PP	-0.095 (0.070)	-0.582** (0.073)	0.487** (0.075)
PSOE	0.665** (0.143)	-0.084 (0.136)	0.750** (0.105)
UP	0.369** (0.118)	-0.088 (0.119)	0.457** (0.090)
Cs	-0.117 (0.102)	-0.444** (0.097)	0.327** (0.089)
Constant	2.155** (0.159)	1.813** (0.155)	0.343** (0.123)
Number of respondent - out-party	5022	5022	5022
Number of respondents	1260	1260	1260
R-squared (within)	0.488	0.453	0.058

Notes: Respondent fixed effects included. Standard errors are clustered by respondent. Cells report coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Figure A4. Within-respondent predicted levels of party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP, by ideological distance categories



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2 and 3 in Table A6.
Source: E-DEM, third wave.

C) Alternative measure of social sorting (1)

Table A7. Linear random intercept models. Party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP as dependent variables

VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: VAP	M3: PAP-VAP
<i>Respondent - out-party level</i>			
Ideological Distance	1.090** (0.062)	0.573** (0.062)	0.514** (0.049)
Ideological Distance Squared	-0.031** (0.007)	0.018* (0.008)	-0.048** (0.006)
<i>Respondent level</i>			
Social Sorting	0.201 (0.316)	1.586** (0.368)	-1.387** (0.358)
Party Identification	2.037** (0.179)	1.759** (0.214)	0.277 (0.208)
Ideology: Left	-0.543** (0.210)	-0.305 (0.244)	-0.245 (0.236)
Ideology: Center-left	-0.243 (0.179)	-0.003 (0.222)	-0.242 (0.224)
Ideology: Center-right	-0.408* (0.194)	-0.118 (0.241)	-0.290 (0.243)
Ideology: Right	-0.006 (0.237)	0.352 (0.278)	-0.363 (0.283)
Political Interest	0.007 (0.251)	0.514+ (0.299)	-0.510 (0.329)
Female	-0.062 (0.114)	-0.142 (0.138)	0.080 (0.134)
Age: 25-34	0.015 (0.231)	0.035 (0.298)	-0.021 (0.306)
Age: 35-44	0.088 (0.232)	-0.282 (0.296)	0.368 (0.310)
Age: 45-54	0.289 (0.225)	0.294 (0.289)	-0.007 (0.307)
Age: 55 or more	0.259 (0.232)	0.103 (0.295)	0.154 (0.307)
Education: Upper Secondary	-0.439* (0.179)	-0.476* (0.220)	0.038 (0.208)
Education: Bachelor or more	-0.403* (0.182)	-0.284 (0.224)	-0.120 (0.214)
PP	-0.170* (0.069)	-0.641** (0.073)	0.465** (0.074)
PSOE	0.493** (0.137)	-0.210 (0.132)	0.703** (0.103)
UP	0.256* (0.117)	-0.159 (0.118)	0.421** (0.090)
Cs	-0.110	-0.392**	0.284**

	(0.102)	(0.098)	(0.089)
Constant	0.801*	0.076	0.734+
	(0.356)	(0.446)	(0.431)
<i>Variance components</i>			
Random intercept b/w respondents	2.467**	4.435**	4.209**
Random intercept b/w respondent - out-party	3.994**	3.884**	3.058**
Number of respondents	1260	1260	1260
Number of respondent - out-party	5022	5022	5022
Log likelihood	-11384.986	-11612.549	-11110.153
Wald chi2(20)	3087.81**	2684.75**	249.16**

Notes: Standard errors are clustered by respondent. Cells report coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses.
** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Table A8. Linear random intercept models. Party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP as dependent variables

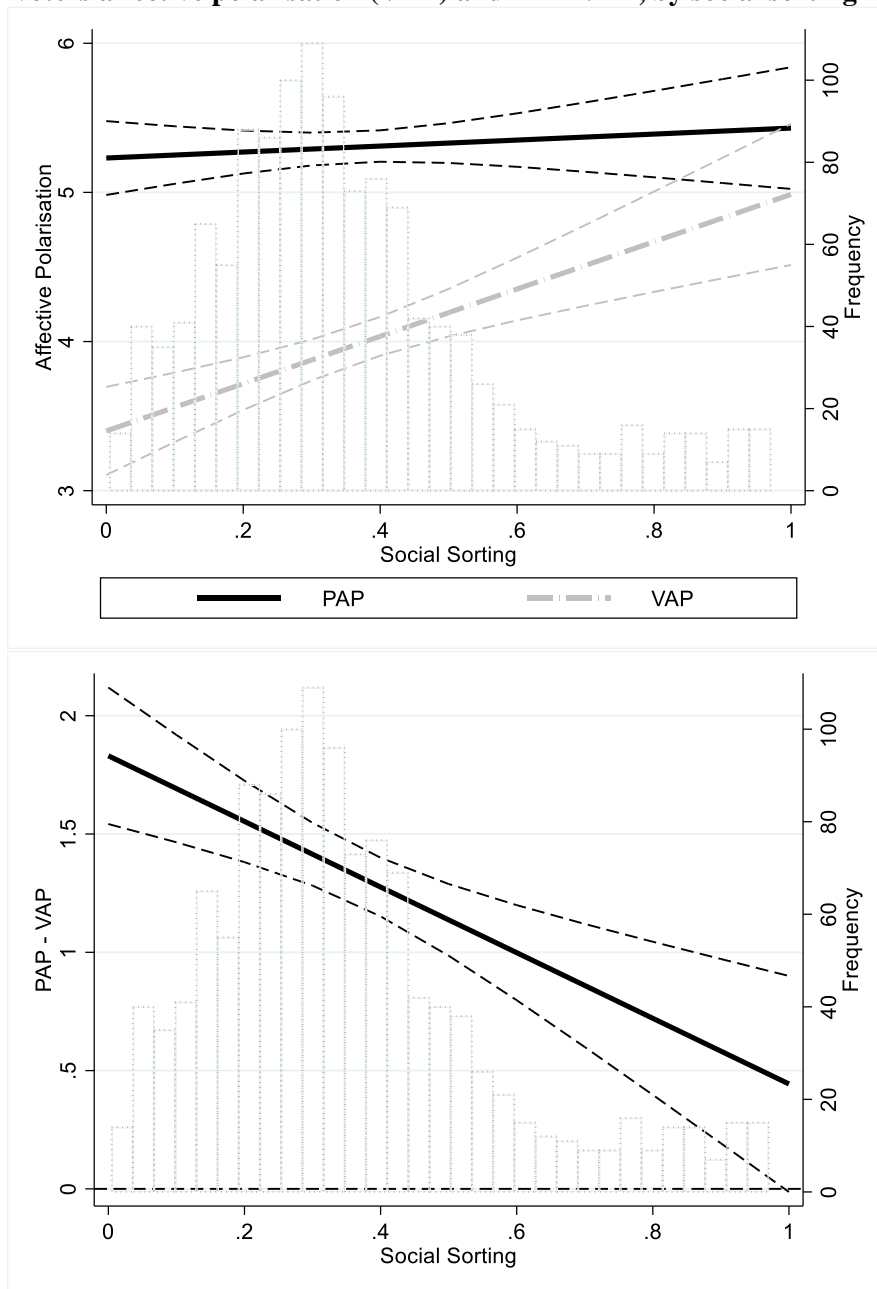
VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: VAP	M3: PAP-VAP
Ideological Distance	0.930** (0.122)	0.290* (0.126)	0.641** (0.095)
Ideological Distance Squared	-0.008 (0.014)	0.043** (0.015)	-0.051** (0.011)
Social Sorting	0.065 (0.646)	-0.262 (0.639)	0.274 (0.473)
Ideol. Dist. X Social Sorting	0.363 (0.267)	0.830** (0.286)	-0.469* (0.208)
Ideol. Dist. Sq. X Social Sorting	-0.053+ (0.027)	-0.071* (0.030)	0.020 (0.022)
Party Identification	2.022** (0.179)	1.762** (0.214)	0.261 (0.208)
Ideology: Left	-0.595** (0.213)	-0.321 (0.247)	-0.276 (0.236)
Ideology: Center-left	-0.284 (0.180)	0.002 (0.222)	-0.285 (0.224)
Ideology: Center-right	-0.415* (0.195)	-0.127 (0.241)	-0.288 (0.243)
Ideology: Right	-0.064 (0.241)	0.335 (0.280)	-0.399 (0.283)
Political Interest	0.033 (0.251)	0.511+ (0.298)	-0.483 (0.327)
Female	-0.066 (0.114)	-0.142 (0.138)	0.076 (0.134)
Age: 25-34	0.018 (0.230)	0.043 (0.297)	-0.026 (0.305)
Age: 35-44	0.089	-0.274	0.363

	(0.231)	(0.295)	(0.309)
Age: 45-54	0.285	0.301	-0.017
	(0.224)	(0.289)	(0.306)
Age: 55 or more	0.257	0.109	0.146
	(0.231)	(0.295)	(0.306)
Education: Upper Secondary	-0.437*	-0.479*	0.042
	(0.179)	(0.220)	(0.207)
Education: Bachelor or more	-0.399*	-0.285	-0.115
	(0.182)	(0.223)	(0.213)
PP	-0.170*	-0.650**	0.473**
	(0.069)	(0.072)	(0.074)
PSOE	0.468**	-0.161	0.631**
	(0.140)	(0.136)	(0.103)
UP	0.243*	-0.135	0.386**
	(0.119)	(0.120)	(0.090)
Cs	-0.116	-0.424**	0.309**
	(0.101)	(0.097)	(0.088)
Constant	0.931*	0.686	0.265
	(0.402)	(0.489)	(0.451)
<i>Variance components</i>			
Random intercept b/w respondents	2.457**	4.438**	4.194**
Random intercept b/w respondent - out-party	3.989**	3.866**	3.040**
<hr/>			
Number of respondents	1260	1260	1260
Number of respondent - out-party	5022	5022	5022
Log likelihood	-11380.476	-11603.618	-11096.568
Wald chi2(22)	3126.82**	2805.60**	266.77**

Notes: Standard errors are clustered by respondent. Cells report coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses.
** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

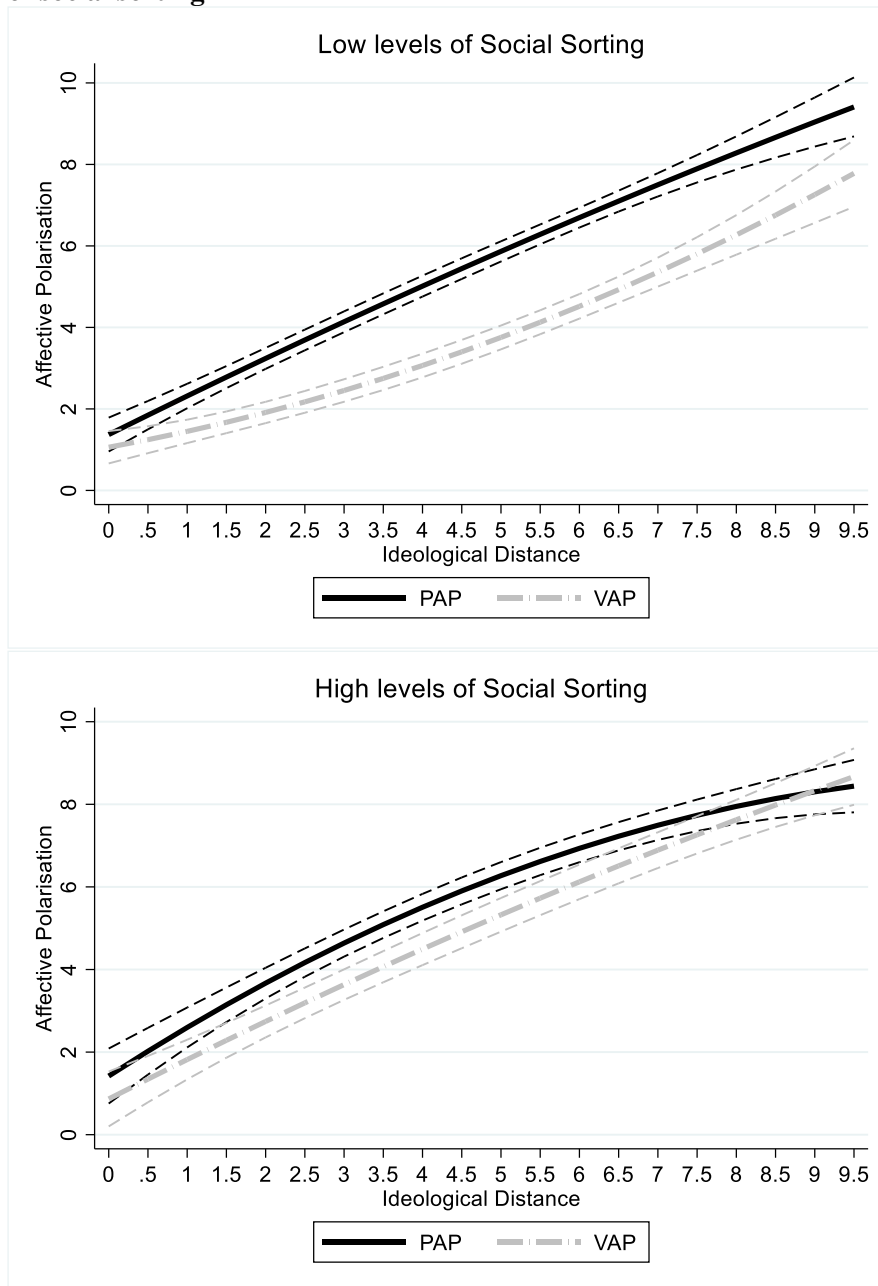
Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Figure A5. Predicted levels of party affective polarisation (PAP), voters affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP, by social sorting



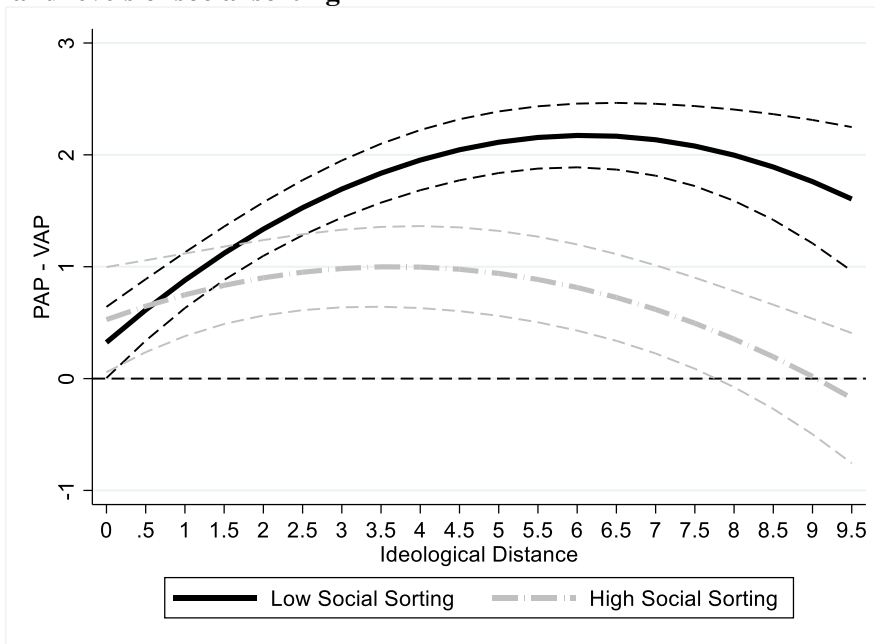
Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2 and 3 in Table A7.
 Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Figure A6. Predicted levels of party affective polarisation (PAP) and voters affective polarisation (VAP) by ideological distance and levels of social sorting



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1 and 2 in Table A8.
Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Figure A7. Predicted difference between party affective polarisation and voters affective polarisation (PAP-VAP) by ideological distance and levels of social sorting



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Model 3 in Table A8.
Source: E-DEM, third wave.

D) Alternative measure of social sorting (2)

Table A9. Linear random intercept models. Party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP as dependent variables

VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: VAP	M3: PAP-VAP
<i>Respondent - out-party level</i>			
Ideological Distance	1.083** (0.062)	0.570** (0.062)	0.509** (0.049)
Ideological Distance Squared	-0.030** (0.007)	0.018* (0.008)	-0.048** (0.006)
<i>Respondent level</i>			
Social Sorting	1.263 (1.168)	4.340** (1.507)	-3.078* (1.419)
Party Identification	2.039** (0.178)	1.793** (0.213)	0.246 (0.208)
Ideology: Left	-0.576** (0.214)	-0.232 (0.247)	-0.351 (0.241)
Ideology: Center-left	-0.264 (0.180)	0.009 (0.224)	-0.275 (0.227)
Ideology: Center-right	-0.407* (0.194)	-0.091 (0.241)	-0.317 (0.243)
Ideology: Right	0.004 (0.238)	0.400 (0.279)	-0.400 (0.282)
Political Interest	-0.005 (0.250)	0.543+ (0.299)	-0.550+ (0.328)
Female	-0.060 (0.114)	-0.142 (0.139)	0.082 (0.135)
Age: 25-34	0.022 (0.230)	-0.002 (0.295)	0.023 (0.303)
Age: 35-44	0.110 (0.230)	-0.300 (0.294)	0.410 (0.305)
Age: 45-54	0.296 (0.223)	0.263 (0.286)	0.031 (0.303)
Age: 55 or more	0.277 (0.229)	0.085 (0.292)	0.190 (0.302)
Education: Upper Secondary	-0.437* (0.177)	-0.452* (0.220)	0.015 (0.207)
Education: Bachelor or more	-0.399* (0.181)	-0.244 (0.223)	-0.155 (0.213)
PP	-0.169* (0.069)	-0.638** (0.072)	0.463** (0.074)
PSOE	0.487** (0.137)	-0.204 (0.132)	0.691** (0.103)
UP	0.260* (0.117)	-0.160 (0.118)	0.426** (0.090)
Cs	-0.101	-0.384**	0.286**

	(0.101)	(0.097)	(0.089)
Constant	-0.030	-2.565*	2.544*
	(0.895)	(1.169)	(1.083)
<i>Variance components</i>			
Random intercept b/w respondents	2.458**	4.480**	4.239**
Random intercept b/w respondent - out-party	3.992**	3.871**	3.063**
<hr/>			
Number of respondents	5050	5050	5050
Number of respondent - out-party	1267	1267	1267
Log likelihood	-11446.035	-11675.536	-11178.826
Wald chi2(20)	3136.59**	2657.42**	241.63**

Notes: Standard errors are clustered by respondent. Cells report coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses.
** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Table A10. Linear random intercept models. Party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP as dependent variables

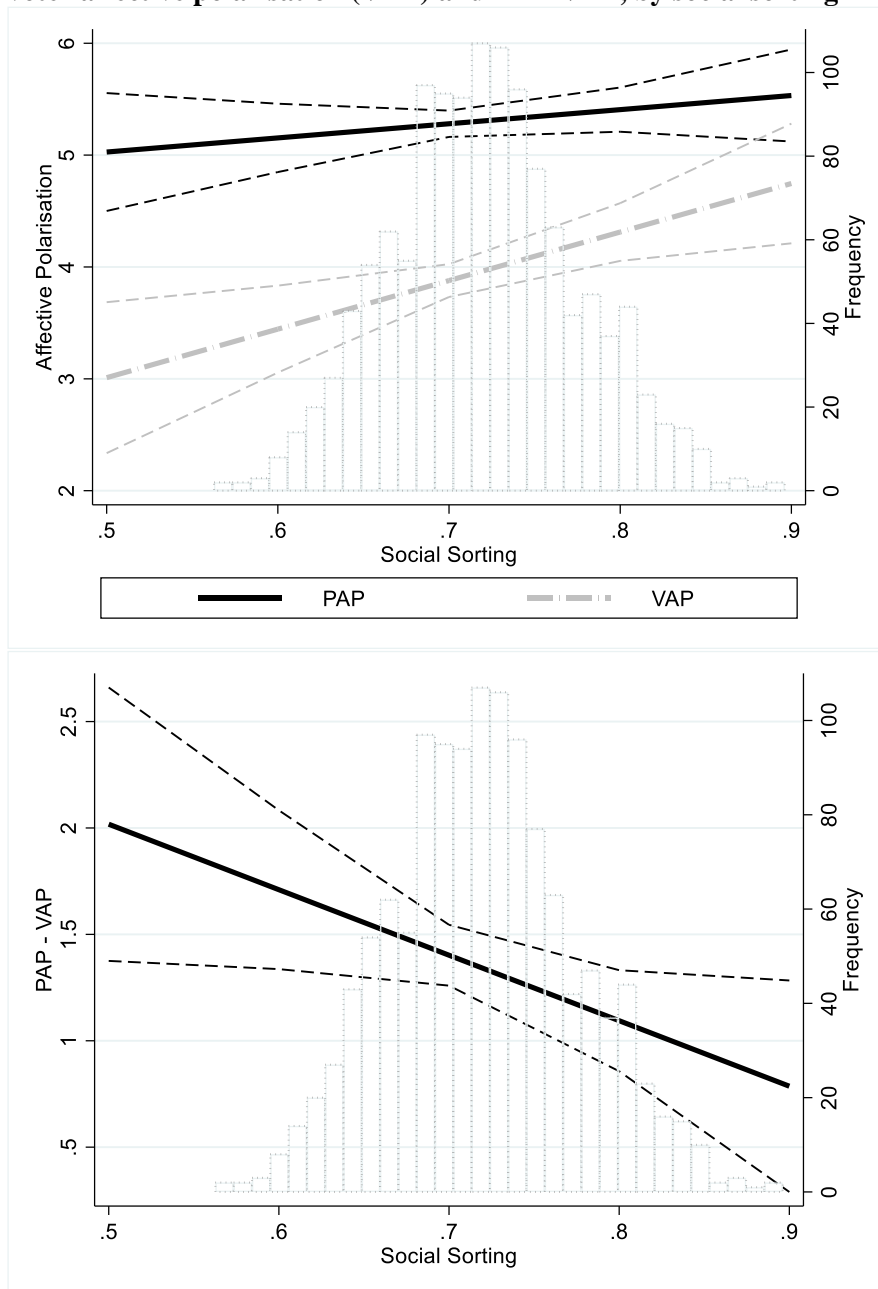
VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: VAP	M3: PAP-VAP
Ideological Distance	0.023	-1.033	1.102+
	(0.830)	(0.886)	(0.657)
Ideological Distance Squared	0.040	0.093	-0.059
	(0.094)	(0.105)	(0.079)
Social Sorting	-2.720	-2.795	0.124
	(2.423)	(2.478)	(1.907)
Ideol. Dist. X Social Sorting	1.497	2.286+	-0.856
	(1.138)	(1.215)	(0.894)
Ideol. Dist. Sq. X Social Sorting	-0.100	-0.110	0.020
	(0.127)	(0.142)	(0.107)
Party Identification	2.043**	1.803**	0.240
	(0.178)	(0.213)	(0.209)
Ideology: Left	-0.572**	-0.214	-0.364
	(0.215)	(0.248)	(0.240)
Ideology: Center-left	-0.250	0.048	-0.299
	(0.183)	(0.225)	(0.227)
Ideology: Center-right	-0.414*	-0.105	-0.310
	(0.193)	(0.241)	(0.243)
Ideology: Right	0.009	0.430	-0.423
	(0.244)	(0.283)	(0.283)
Political Interest	-0.011	0.523+	-0.538
	(0.251)	(0.297)	(0.327)
Female	-0.060	-0.143	0.083
	(0.114)	(0.139)	(0.135)
Age: 25-34	0.028	0.012	0.015
	(0.230)	(0.296)	(0.304)
Age: 35-44	0.121	-0.275	0.396

	(0.230)	(0.294)	(0.305)
Age: 45-54	0.309	0.296	0.012
	(0.223)	(0.287)	(0.303)
Age: 55 or more	0.287	0.108	0.177
	(0.229)	(0.292)	(0.302)
Education: Upper Secondary	-0.441*	-0.461*	0.020
	(0.177)	(0.219)	(0.206)
Education: Bachelor or more	-0.402*	-0.250	-0.152
	(0.181)	(0.223)	(0.213)
PP	-0.175*	-0.647**	0.466**
	(0.069)	(0.072)	(0.074)
PSOE	0.535**	-0.101	0.639**
	(0.142)	(0.137)	(0.104)
UP	0.306*	-0.062	0.375**
	(0.123)	(0.125)	(0.092)
Cs	-0.119	-0.412**	0.296**
	(0.101)	(0.097)	(0.089)
Constant	2.772	2.417	0.324
	(1.758)	(1.849)	(1.454)
<i>Variance components</i>			
Random intercept b/w respondents	2.459**	4.486**	4.239**
Random intercept b/w respondent - out-party	3.984**	3.840**	3.055**
<hr/>			
Number of respondents	5050	5050	5050
Number of respondent - out-party	1267	1267	1267
Log likelihood	-11442.223	-11660.36	-11174.068
Wald chi2(22)	3230.82**	2843.59**	244.82**

Notes: Standard errors are clustered by respondent. Cells report coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses.
** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

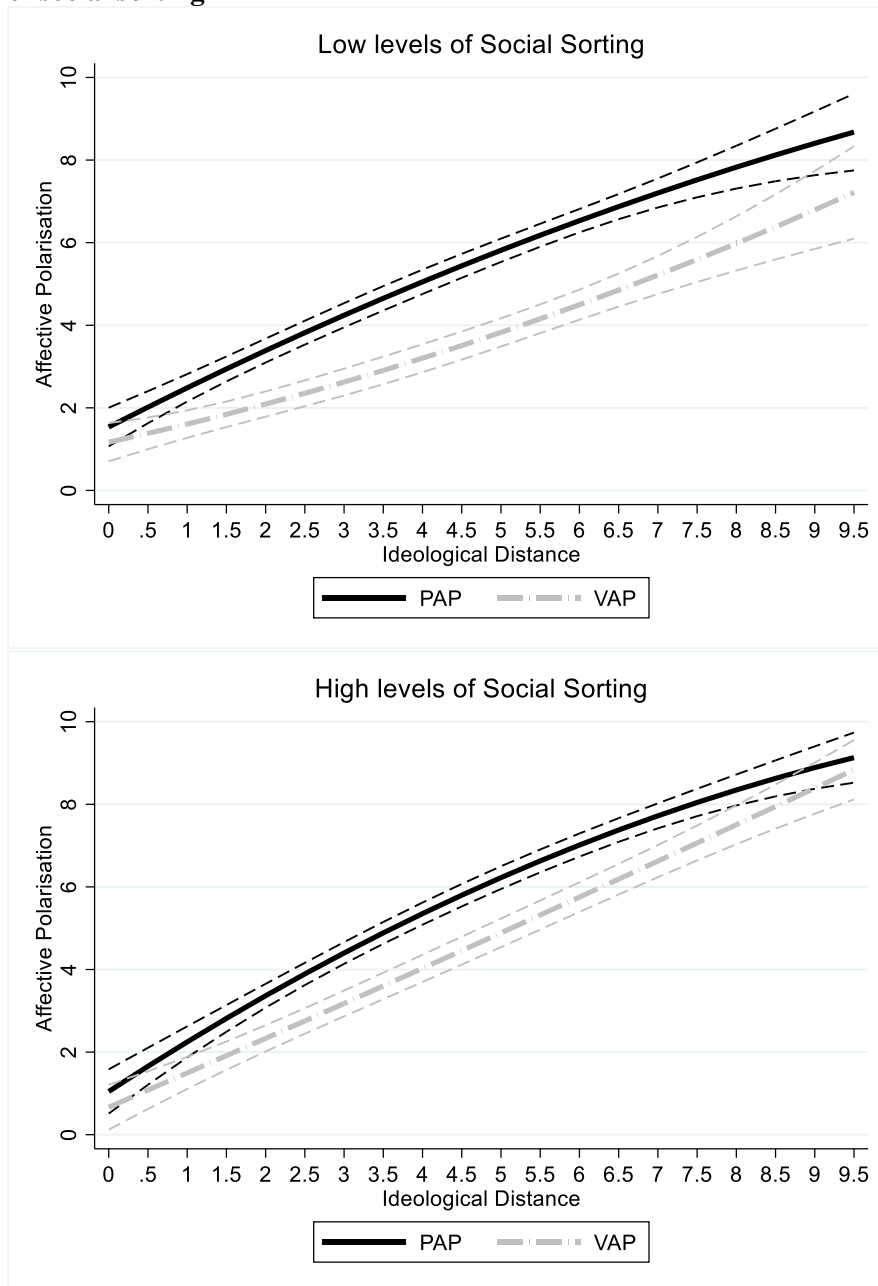
Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Figure A8. Predicted levels of party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP, by social sorting



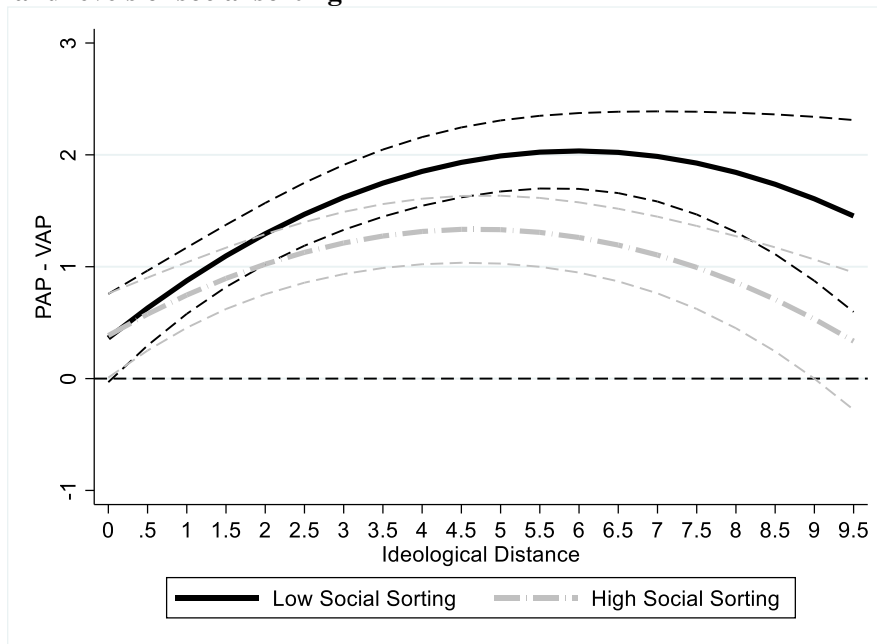
Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2 and 3 in Table A9.
Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Figure A9. Predicted levels of party affective polarisation (PAP) and voter affective polarisation (VAP) by ideological distance and levels of social sorting



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1 and 2 in Table A10.
Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Figure A10. Predicted difference between party affective polarisation and voter affective polarisation (PAP-VAP) by ideological distance and levels of social sorting



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Model 3 in Table A10.
Source: E-DEM, third wave.

3. AFFECTIVE ROOTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE RADICAL RIGHT EMERGENCE: THE CASE OF VOX IN SPAIN^{* †}

Abstract. This paper explores the relationship between the electoral emergence of radical right parties and affective polarisation. We argue that affective polarisation is not only a consequence of the emergence of radical right parties but also a root cause of their initial electoral success. The findings demonstrate that the emergence of such parties is preceded by high levels of negative feelings towards left-wing partisans among supporters of moderate right parties and low levels of positive sentiments towards their own in-group of partisans. Once radical right parties emerge in the electoral arena, overall levels of affective polarisation increase again, although to a different degree across partisan groups. First, levels of affective polarisation of individuals who switch their support to a radical right party increase because of the strengthening of in-group sentiments. Second, to the extent that its emergence and visibility represent a stronger threat to left-wing partisans, these supporters react to the success of the radical right by increasing their levels of affective polarisation. We provide empirical evidence in favour of these arguments by using an original panel dataset (E-DEM, 2018–2019) collected in Spain that covers the entire period of the electoral emergence of VOX, a radical right party.

Keywords: Affective polarisation; radical right; VOX; Spain; panel data

^{*} Paper co-authored with Prof. Mariano Torcal (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona).

[†] This paper has been pre-selected for a special issue on affective polarisation in the *European Journal of Political Research* (EJPR) and will soon start the peer review process.

3.1. Introduction

Whereas the literature has mainly shown that the electoral surge of radical right parties (RRPs) fuels ideological polarisation among voters (Bischof and Wagner 2019), evidence has also been presented that a similar relationship could be observed for an affective type of polarisation. Partisan affective polarisation generally refers to the extent that individuals feel sympathy towards supporters of their party and antagonism towards partisans of the other parties (Iyengar et al. 2012, 2019). This type of polarisation tends to go beyond the elites' level by extending to everyday social relations, sometimes reaching situations of partisan prejudice (Lelkes and Westwood 2017). Studies have shown that increases in elite polarisation on 'cultural' issues (national identity and multiculturalism) are associated with higher levels of affective polarisation (Gidron et al. 2020; Hartevelde 2021). This finding is relevant because of the radical right's 'ownership' of these issues and its capacity to further polarise political systems around them. Other studies have reported that supporters of mainstream parties and RRPs strongly oppose each other (Hartevelde et al. 2021; Helbling and Jungkunz 2020) and that a large section of the Western European electorate exhibits the strongest levels of negative partisanship towards RRPs (e.g. Hartevelde et al. 2019a; Meléndez and Kaltwasser 2021).

However, does the electoral emergence of RRPs spur affective polarisation among the public, or does this type of polarisation precede the initial electoral success of the radical right? In the case that the rise of these parties fuels affective attitudes, is the increase in affective polarisation the same for all partisan groups?

This paper explores these questions in detail with a longitudinal case study. We argue that the emergence of the radical right is rooted in prior affective attitudes and that, in turn, the rise of these parties spur affective polarisation among the population. On the one hand, the electoral irruption of RRPs is partially from the supporters of the moderate right who hold prior high levels of negative feelings towards left-wing partisans and low levels of positive sentiments towards their own group of partisans. On the other hand, their electoral emergence and visibility fuel affective polarisation among the public, but for different reasons and with different intensities that vary by the partisan group. First, individuals who switched their support to RRPs may experience a strengthening in affective polarisation as their in-partisan liking increases. Second, the intensity of the

affective reaction of the other partisan groups to the radical right's success is a function of the levels of perceived threat posed by RRPs.

To support these arguments, we study the case of the RRP VOX in Spain by using the Spanish E-DEM panel survey (Torcal et al. 2020), conducted during the electoral emergence of this RRP. The analyses provide empirical evidence in favour of the expectations.

3.2. Theoretical Framework

3.2.1. RRPs and affective polarisation

RRPs are defined by three main traits (Golder 2016). The first one is nativism, which combines nationalism with xenophobia and defends monocultural nation-states that comprise only members of the native group (Mudde 2007). Authoritarianism is the second, which refers to the defence of a strictly ordered society and a 'law-and-order' system that strongly punishes deviant behaviour (Mudde 2007). The final one is populism, which defends that societies are characterised by a conflict between the "pure people" and the "corrupted elite" and contains an anti-establishment discourse (Mudde 2004). RRPs have been successful in mobilising a portion of electors who hold a social conservative attitudinal profile and perceive that globalisation threatens their social status (Gidron and Hall 2017; Hooghe and Marks 2018; Kriesi et al. 2008, 2012). The main drivers of voters for RRPs are their anti-immigration preferences and, to a lower degree, nationalist attitudes, which differ from those of other voters (e.g. Lubbers and Coenders 2017; Zhirkov 2014). Moreover, RRPs can mobilise voters with high levels of political distrust (e.g. Schulte-Cloos and Leininger 2021; Rooduijn et al. 2016).

In most Western European countries, a social stigma is associated with RRPs because of their radical, exclusionary ideology and, in some cases, historical roots with fascism and/or extremist and racist movements (Harteveld et al. 2019a; 2019b). In addition, in Western Europe, the rise of RRPs exhibiting strong populist rhetoric has been followed by an anti-populist reaction among most mainstream parties that has progressively crystallised in a new populism–anti-populism divide (Moffitt 2018). Congruent with this social stigma and political divide, studies have shown that supporters of mainstream parties and RRPs strongly dislike each other, although voters of mainstream parties tend

to resent the radical right supporters more than the other way around (Harteveld 2021; Harteveld et al. 2021; Helbling and Jungkunz 2020). Moreover, studies have also found that affective polarisation is associated with higher levels of polarisation around a set of issues that tend to be ‘owned’ by RRPs, especially immigration and multiculturalism (Gidron et al. 2020; Harteveld 2021).

Hence, supporters of RRPs express and receive high levels of partisan hostility. However, how the emergence of these parties is related to affective polarisation is unknown. In this paper, we argue that affective polarisation is not only a consequence of the emergence of RRPs but also a root cause of their initial electoral success.

3.2.2. Affective roots of radical right electoral emergence

The initial electoral success of RRPs may have affective roots. The emergence of these parties may be preceded by high levels of polarisation around social and cultural issues between mainstream parties that promoted political resentment among a section of the moderate right electorate.

RRPs compete primarily with the mainstream right for the same segment of voters, as indicated by the fact that gains from centre-right parties are by far the largest contributor to radical right electorates (Abou-Chadi et al. 2021; Rama et al. 2021b). The success of the radical right is not only related to institutional and sociological factors, but it is also shaped by the strategic behaviour of political parties and their struggle over issue saliency and positions (Meguid 2005). The primary goal of RRPs is to increase the saliency of the issues that are ‘owned’ by them, especially immigration, at the same time that they use anti-establishment rhetoric to weaken the competence advantage of mainstream parties (De Vries and Hobolt 2020).

Different sociological and political dynamics since the late 1960’s has created electoral space for RRPs by increasing the saliency of sociocultural issues (Mudde 2010). The progressive development of post-material values and the success of the new left led to a neoconservative ‘counter-revolution’ that paved the way for RRPs (Ignazi 1992). Simultaneously, economic integration has pushed mainstream left and right parties to gradually converge their positions on economic issues and emphasise in a greater degree non-economic ones (e.g. Berman and Snegovaya 2019; Ward et al. 2015). Congruent

with this, empirical research has shown that RRPs benefit from the high saliency of issues such as immigration, security or national sovereignty (e.g. Arzheimer 2009) and, in particular, that the more attention centre-right parties pay to immigration in electoral campaigns, the greater the success of RRPs (Hutter and Kriesi 2021).

In a context of increasing competition between mainstream parties around social and cultural issues, the emphasis of centre-right parties on the traditional concerns of the radical right may not only facilitate the emergence of RRPs by drawing attention to these challenger parties and reinforcing their issue ownership, but also by increasing affective polarisation among the moderate right electorate. That is, the electoral surge of the radical right could partially be the result of polarising strategies on sociocultural issues conducted by centre-right parties that fuel the resentment of part of the most social conservative sectors of their electorate towards those adopting progressive positions on issues such as national identity or immigration, mainly identified as left-wing partisans. This is congruent with the studies showing that sociocultural issues, which are ends-focused issues with a highly symbolic, affective nature, directly connect with personality traits and core values and tend to generate strong emotional reactions (Johnston and Wronski 2015).

These moderate right partisans who are most strongly affectively polarised against their political opponents on the left would be the most attracted to the Manichean, aggressive and emotional discourse of RRPs and, hence, the most likely to drop their support for the moderate right and embrace the rising RRP. As recent research has shown, populist and radical parties and leaders make a stronger use of negative campaigns, character attacks and fear appeals than their mainstream competitors (Nai 2021), a communicative style that may attract those who are highly affectively polarised against the groups that are the target of these radical parties. Hence, the first hypothesis (H1) is as follows:

H1. The electoral emergence of an RRP is preceded, among moderate right partisans, by high levels of negative feelings towards supporters of left-wing parties.

Origins of the radical right's success may not be only those moderate right electors who express high levels of antipathy towards left-wing partisans but also those with low levels of positive affective attachments towards their own moderate right party and, by

extension, its voters. The populist rhetoric of RRPs seeks to discredit their competitors and weaken the linkages between voters and mainstream parties (e.g. De Vries and Hobolt 2020; Schulte-Cloos and Leininger 2021). Such strategy is more likely to succeed in contexts of economic downturn or when mainstream parties face corruption scandals, and also when RRPs are in opposition or recently rising (e.g. Kriesi and Schulte-Cloos 2020).

Particularly, RRPs usually attempt to cast doubt on the ability of centre-right parties to deliver on their promises. As Bonikowski and Ziblatt (2019) argued, some moderate right parties exhibit, to mobilise and create a socially heterogeneous electorate, nationalist rhetoric that, later, is not usually congruent with the policies applied when they form the government; this dishonesty tends to frustrate sectors of the moderate right electorate that may be electorally exploited by the radical right. For example, the recently rising party Alternative for Germany explicitly proclaimed in one campaign poster in the 2018 regional Bavarian election that ‘we will do what the Christian Social Union [CSU] promises!’ (Bonikowski and Ziblatt 2019); similarly, the leaders of the Spanish RRP VOX usually refer to the centre-right Popular Party (PP) as ‘the coward right’ whose leaders ‘have not dared to combat certain postulates of the left that they did fight in the opposition, but that in the government they have kept immaculate’¹. Therefore, the second hypothesis (H2) is as follows:

H2. The electoral emergence of an RRP is preceded, among moderate right partisans, by low levels of positive feelings towards their own partisan group.

3.2.3. Affective consequences of the radical right’s electoral emergence

The emergence of the radical right in the electoral arena is not only partially originated by prior feelings about partisans among moderate right supporters but may also fuel affective polarisation. However, the intensity of this increase and the causes behind it may vary by the partisan group.

¹ Source: El Independiente [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yfpqsy7OAv0&ab_channel=ElIndependiente].

First, an expectation should be that electors switching their support to the radical right will increase their levels of affective polarisation, driven by the strengthening of positive feelings towards their own partisan group. To the extent that, as argued, individuals who support the emerging radical right tended to have low levels of sympathy towards their own moderate right party and its voters (H2); the rise of an RRP expressing populist messages and defending nativist positions should provide a satisfactory response to the discontent and policy preferences of these electors, increasing their levels of in-group liking. As social identity theory shows, even in the most basic definition of a group there is, among its members, a sense of group identification and a tendency towards in-group bias (e.g. Mason 2018). Thus, it seems reasonable to expect that those discontent centre-right partisans who embrace the rising RRP will quickly develop a feeling of belonging to the new group and hold positive sentiments for radical right supporters. Torcal (2021) provided empirical evidence on Spain: from October 2018 to May 2019, a substantive increase was observed in the positive feelings of VOX supporters towards their group of partisans, characterised by the irruption of this party. Hence, the third hypothesis (H3) is as follows:

H3. The electoral emergence of an RRP increases in-group liking among those who switch their support to the radical party.

Second, regarding the remaining partisan groups, we expect that the radical right's success fuels affective polarisation among supporters of left-wing parties, but not so much among supporters of moderate right parties. According to intergroup emotions theory, an extension of social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979), individuals identified with a group are prone to react with anger and vilify an opposing group when perceiving a threat to their in-group (e.g. Mackie et al. 2000). Applied to the partisan realm, studies of the United States' have found that partisans react with anger and higher levels of involvement in the electoral campaign in favour of their party to the electoral threats posed by the other party (e.g. Huddy et al. 2015; Mason 2015, 2018). To the extent that the radical right represents a stronger threat to left-wing partisans than to the supporters of the moderate right, the affective reaction to these parties of the former should be significantly stronger than the reaction of the latter.

Concretely, the nativism and authoritarianism defended by the radical right represent a direct challenge to the core political values associated with a left orientation in Western societies, whose supporters mainly believe in equality, accepting immigrants and civic liberties (Caprara and Vecchione 2018). Hence, a congruent expectation is that left-wing partisans will react to the surge of RRPs by increasing their levels of affective polarisation: these individuals may develop strong levels of antipathy towards the radical party and their partisans and, simultaneously, reinforce the positive feelings towards their own partisan group in a defensive reaction. The radical right, by contrast, represents a more partial challenge to moderate right partisans: although reluctant to support the radicalism, authoritarianism and populism of RRPs, they may feel relatively close to some positions defended by these parties that connect with core values generally associated with the right, especially its law-and-order platform; version of patriotism; defence of a waning, dominant way of life; and stance against multiculturalism (Caprara and Vecchione 2018). Congruently, moderate right partisans may experience a smaller change in their levels of affective polarisation: their negative feelings towards RRPs may be less pronounced than those of left-wing partisans, and their levels of in-group liking may not vary substantially.

In a recent cross-country study, Hartevelde et al. (2021) show that, due to the social stigma associated with RRPs, the dislike towards the radical right is applied relatively homogeneously, in the sense that it is strong in all party families. However, the ideological distance between mainstream party supporters and the RRP remains significant in shaping antipathy towards the RRP, and supporters of the mainstream right tend to dislike the radical right in a lesser degree than supporters of the left. These cross-sectional results seem quite consistent with the possibility that the emergence of the radical right has a greater impact on the levels of affective polarisation of left-wing partisans than on the levels of mainstream right supporters. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis (H4), the final hypothesis, is as follows:

H4. The electoral emergence of an RRP increases affective polarisation to a greater degree among left-wing partisans than among moderate right partisans.

3.3. The Case: VOX in Spain

To test the hypotheses, we study the case of VOX in Spain using a panel dataset conducted during the emergence of this party. Spain had long been on the exclusive list of countries in Europe without a relevant RRP. However, this situation changed with the sudden rise of VOX. Formed in December 2013, VOX first obtained political representation in the regional election held in December 2018 in Andalucía, the most populous Spanish region; concretely, the radical party won 10.96% of the regional vote and 12 (of 109) seats. This regional election catapulted VOX to the national level and placed it at the centre of the electoral campaign for the Spanish general elections held in April 2019, in which the party obtained 10.26% of the vote and 24 (of 350) seats. Although in the subsequent local, regional and European Parliament elections held in May 2019, VOX obtained more modest results, the party significantly increased their representation in the repetition of the general elections in November 2019 (15.98% the vote and 52 seats).

The irruption of VOX has completed a transformation of the Spanish party system during the last decade from an imperfect bipartisanship dominated by the centre-left *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE) and the centre-right *Partido Popular* (PP) to the current multiparty system with the additional presence, in addition to VOX, of the radical left party *Unidas Podemos* (UP) and the centre-right party *Ciudadanos* (Cs) (Orriols and Cordero 2016; Rama et al. 2021a). This transformation, despite the new interparty dynamics and disputes that have been generated, has resulted in an interblock ideological confrontation between two major groups at the national level: the left formed by the UP and PSOE and the right formed by Cs, PP and VOX (e.g. Simon 2020).

VOX is a member of the RRP family: Spanish nationalism, nativism and authoritarianism constitute central elements of the party's ideology and populism rhetoric is also present. VOX is also characterised by its strong defence of what it considers traditional values and a neoliberal economic agenda (Ferreira 2019). Studies have shown that the ideological features of the party are reflected in its supporters' attitudes: a combination of Spanish national identity and negative assessments of the political situation increases the probability of voters supporting VOX (Turnbull-Dugarte et al. 2020), and individuals' negative perceptions towards immigration also fuel the vote for this party (Torcal 2019a; for a thorough analysis of VOX and its supporters, see Rama et al. 2021b).

The emergence of VOX, as explained by some studies, is related to the prior rise in the salience of the territorial and immigration issues, linked to the territorial Catalan conflict and the increase in the number of irregular arrivals to Spain by sea in 2018 (Mendes and Dennison 2021). The sometimes harsh and catastrophist positions of Spanish centre-right parties on these issues and their polarising strategies of competition may have decisively contributed to the rise of VOX (Torcal 2019b; Rodríguez-Teruel 2021). Since the successful motion of no confidence that resulted in the downfall of the conservative Mariano Rajoy's government and the Socialist Pedro Sánchez becoming new Prime Minister in June 2018, centre-right parties started a harsh opposition to the Socialist government; notably, the PP leader, Pablo Casado, went so far as to accuse Sánchez of 'illegitimate' Primer Minister². Hence, a reasonable expectation is that moderate right partisans holding the highest levels of animosity towards left-wing supporters were those who switched their support to the emerging VOX. In addition, in the years before the rise of VOX, a portion of the Spanish right-to-centre electorate did not have a clear partisan reference: PP was in a situation of discredit due to its implication in corruption scandals and its contested management of the Catalan crisis, and the programmatic and strategic erratic fluctuations of Cs were reflected in a volatile vote intention in polls (Mendes and Dennison 2021).

The surprising irruption of VOX in the Andalusian election affected strongly the subsequent electoral campaign for the April Spanish general elections. On the right side of the political spectrum, PP and Cs rejected a *cordoin sanitaire* against VOX, accepted the radical right's external support for the conformation of a PP–Cs regional cabinet in Andalucía and did not deny the possibility that the same formula could be repeated at the national level if the results made it feasible. Soon, the media started to call PP, Cs and VOX the 'right-wing tripartite'. On the left side of the spectrum, PSOE and UP mobilised their electorate against the threat represented by a possible right-wing government with the participation of the radical right (Rodon 2020). The reaction of the parties' elites to the irruption of VOX, hence, seems to be congruent with the expectation that the increase in affective polarisation should be greater, if not only existent, among left-wing partisans than among moderate right-wing partisans.

² Source: Cadena SER [https://cadenaser.com/ser/2018/11/29/politica/1543505237_963580.html].

Finally, Spain presents a level of aggregate affective polarisation high in comparative perspective (Gidron et al. 2020) and has followed an (irregular) upward trend during the last three decades (Torcal and Comellas, forthcoming). Moreover, the affective polarisation was high before the irruption of VOX, suggesting that this prior polarisation may have contributed to the rise of the party, without ruling out that the latter may have affectively further polarised the population (Torcal 2021).

3.4. Data and Methods

The Spanish E-DEM dataset comprises a four-wave online panel survey of the Spanish voting age population conducted between October 2018 and May 2019 (for details, see Torcal et al. 2020). We use two waves, wave 1 and wave 3, from this dataset to test the prior hypotheses. The first wave was conducted between late October and early November 2018, before the irruption of VOX in the Andalusian regional election. Wave 3 was performed at the end of April 2019, just before the Spanish general elections. Both waves contain all the information necessary to operationalise affective polarisation and the relevant control variables.

First, respondents are classified into partisan groups by their most-liked voter group; concretely, we employed 0–100 feelings scales towards voters that were rescaled to range from 0 (negative feelings) to 10 (positive feelings). For example, a respondent that evaluates with the highest like–dislike score the voters of PP is classified as a PP partisan. Specifically, the survey includes feelings scales for the voters of the main Spanish political parties (i.e. PSOE, PP, Cs and UP) in both selected waves; the scale for VOX voters is only included in wave 3 because the first wave was conducted before the electoral emergence of this party. In the case that some respondents assign their highest liking score to more than one voter group, we attempt to identify with which of these voters the respondents felt closer to by using party identification; for those who do not identify with any of these parties, we use their reported vote choice in the prior or next elections³. The few remaining respondents who cannot be attributed to a specific

³ In wave 1, we assign the preferred group to these respondents based on their reported vote choice in the last 2016 general elections; in wave 3, we use vote intention in the next 2019 general elections. Moreover, for those who do not report voting for any of these parties, we use a third variable to assign them a specific group. In wave 1, a survey question asks respondents which party they would have voted for in the last

preferred group are discarded from the analyses. This definition of in-group as the most-liked group is based on Wagner (2021, pp. 4-5). (Alternatively, we define the partisan groups by party identification and, for those not identified with a main Spanish political party, vote choice).

Affective polarisation is measured as the weighted mean affective distance from the most-liked group of voters, applying the formula Wagner proposed (2021, p. 5). This index captures how much a respondent on average dislikes the other party's voters compared with his/her preferred voters' group. This affective distance is weighted by the electoral size of the party of each other voters' group (for detailed information on weights, see the Appendix). In the analyses performed in this paper, we also use the feelings scale towards the preferred group of voters (in-group liking) and the reversed feelings scale (measuring negative feelings) towards other voters' groups (out-group dislike). These indices range from 0 to 10.

The use of feelings scales towards voters represents a relevant improvement from most of the comparative literature that employs feelings towards parties. As empirically shown, the polarisation of sentiments towards parties tends to significantly overestimate the levels of resentment between ordinary partisans (e.g. Kingzette 2021), which is the core of the definition of affective polarisation.

To test H1 and H2, we perform a logistic regression model with a dummy dependent variable measured at wave 3 that distinguishes between VOX partisans (i.e. those whose most-liked group is VOX voters) and partisans of other parties (i.e. those whose preferred group is PP, Cs, PSOE or UP voters). Different predictor variables measured at wave 1 (before the irruption of VOX in the Andalusian regional election) are included in the model. The key independent variables are positive feelings towards their own group of partisans and negative feelings towards out-group partisans. The control variables are ideological self-placement, attitudes towards two issues that have been shown to drive support for VOX (immigration and government decentralisation) and basic sociodemographic factors⁴. In this manner, we explore which factors, before the electoral

general elections if they had participated; in wave 3, we take advantage of the probabilities to vote (PTVs) by assigning respondents to their highest PTV.

⁴ Ideological self-placement is an eleven-point scale that ranges from left to right. Attitudes towards immigration are measured using eleven-point opinion scales on cultural assimilation of migrants and immigration level. A composed scale is created that ranges from positive to negative attitudes towards

emergence of the radical right, predict the probability of becoming a VOX partisan some months later, just before the Spanish general elections.

To test H3 and H4, we implement several respondent fixed effects linear models that estimate the change between waves 3 (post VOX's emergence) and 1 (pre VOX's emergence) in affective polarisation and other feelings about partisans (in-group liking and dislike towards out-groups) across partisan groups. All these models include as control variables ideological extremism, extremism on the issue of immigration and extremism on the issue of decentralisation⁵, as well as ideological self-placement and attitudes towards immigration and decentralization. By controlling for these factors, we ensure that the results do not merely reflect the increasing polarisation of ideological and issue positions among the population. Standard errors are clustered on respondents. Concerns of unobserved time-varying confounders are attenuated by the short time gap between the two waves. Moreover, we contend that it is difficult to think of other events occurring during the analysed period beyond the emergence of VOX that could explain the differences in the changes in affective polarisation (and in in-group liking and out-group dislike) across partisan groups.

3.5. Results

We start by testing H1 and H2, according to which we should observe that moderate right partisans holding, before the surge of VOX, high levels of negative feelings towards left-wing partisans and low levels of positive sentiments towards their own group of partisans are more likely to become VOX supporters once this party irrupts in Andalucía. First, of 114 VOX partisans at wave 3, 99 were PP or Cs partisans at wave 1 (87%) and only 15 were PSOE or UP partisans (13%); therefore, the data confirms that the vast majority of VOX supporters proceeds from the moderate right. Because H1 and H2 refer to the

immigration. Attitudes towards government decentralization are measured using an eleven-point opinion scale that ranges from positive to negative attitudes towards decentralization. Sociodemographic variables are sex, age and education levels. Education is codified in three categories: bachelor, 5 years or more; upper secondary or bachelor, 3 years; and lower secondary or less. This latter category is the reference category.

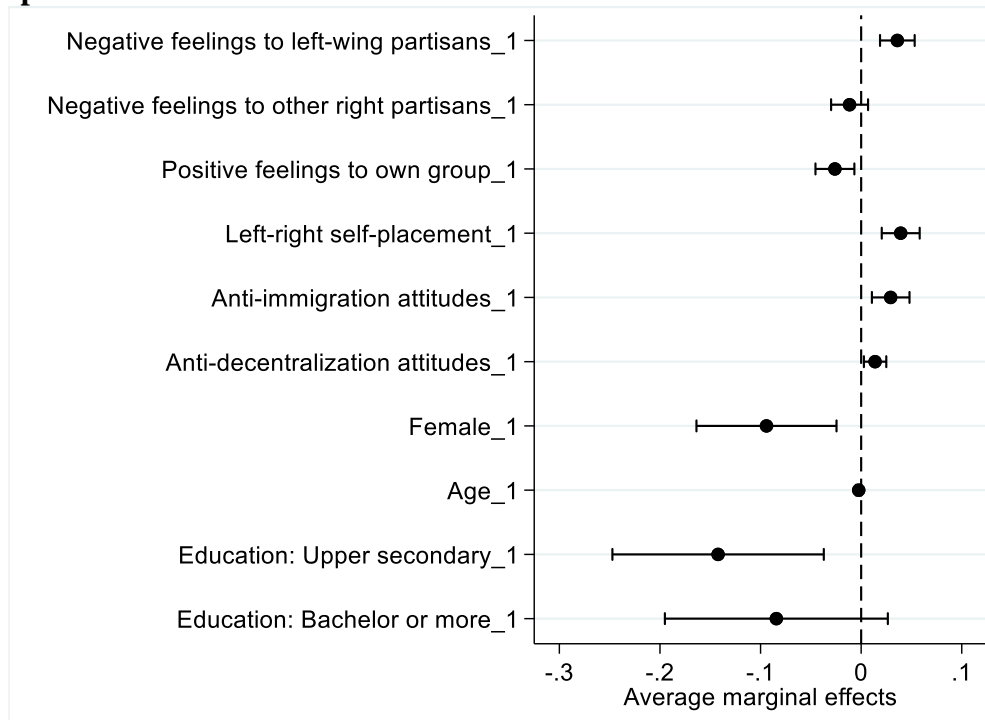
⁵ Ideological extremism is measured as the absolute difference between the respondent's ideological self-placement and the mean ideological position of respondents in a given wave. Issue extremism variables are measured in the same way.

affective attitudes of moderate right supporters, we restrict the main analyses to PP and Cs partisans at wave 1.

We have performed a logistic regression that predicts the probability of being a VOX partisan at wave 3 (versus being a partisan of another main Spanish party) as a function of three feelings about partisans measured at wave 1: positive sentiments towards their own partisan group (for a PP [Cs] partisan, this variable measures his/her positive feelings towards PP [Cs] voters), negative feelings towards the supporters of the other moderate right party (for a PP [Cs] partisan, this measures his/her negative feelings towards Cs [PP] voters) and negative feelings towards the supporters of left-wing parties (this measures the mean negative feelings towards the voters of PSOE and UP, weighted by party size). We control for the ideological, attitudinal and sociodemographic variables mentioned above ideological self-placement (also at wave 1), sex, age and education levels (see descriptive statistics in Table A1 and regression results in Table A2 in the Appendix).

Figure 1 shows the average marginal effects of this model. In line with H1, negative sentiments towards left-wing partisans at wave 1 increase the probability of being a VOX partisan at wave 3 while keeping all other variables constant: a one unit increase in negative feelings towards left-wing party voters (measured on a 0–10 scale), before the emergence of VOX, leads to an increase in the likelihood to support VOX of 3.6 percentage points. H2 is also supported by the results: a one unit decrease in the positive sentiments towards their own partisan group, before the rise of VOX, leads to an increase in the probability of becoming a radical right partisan of 2.6 percentage points. Negative sentiments towards the voters of the other moderate right parties exert no significant effects. Concerning the control variables, moderate right partisans with more extreme positions to the right and negative attitudes towards immigration and government decentralization are more prone to switch their partisan affiliation to VOX; males are also more likely to become VOX partisans, and age has no significant effects; and less-educated individuals are more prone to being attracted to VOX than those with middle levels of education, although the difference is not significant for those with the highest education levels.

Figure 1. Marginal effects of feelings about partisans on the probability of becoming a VOX partisan. Only moderate right partisans are considered



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Model 1 in Table A2.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

In summary and as hypothesised in H1 and H2, the emergence of VOX is preceded, among moderate right partisans, by high levels of dislike feelings towards left party voters and low levels of positive sentiments towards their own group. But what is the ideological and sociodemographic profile of these two groups of moderate right partisans who switch to VOX? We have performed, first, a linear regression model that predicts negative feelings towards left-wing partisans as a function of the selected ideological, attitudinal and sociodemographic variables (all of them measured at wave 1 and only considering moderate right partisans) (Table A3 and Figure A1 in the Appendix). Congruent with the theoretical framework, moderate right supporters with high levels of animosity towards left party voters tend to be more rightist and opposed to immigration (and also favourable to a centralized state). None of the sociodemographic factors are significant. Second, the same analysis is performed but with positive sentiments towards the own partisan group as dependent variable (Table A4 and Figure A2 in the Appendix). The results show that only ideology exerts a (negative) significant effect. That is, the findings suggest that VOX was able to attract the support of a group of centre-right

partisans disaffected with their parties characterised by a weak ideological identity and a quite heterogeneous attitudinal and sociodemographic profile.

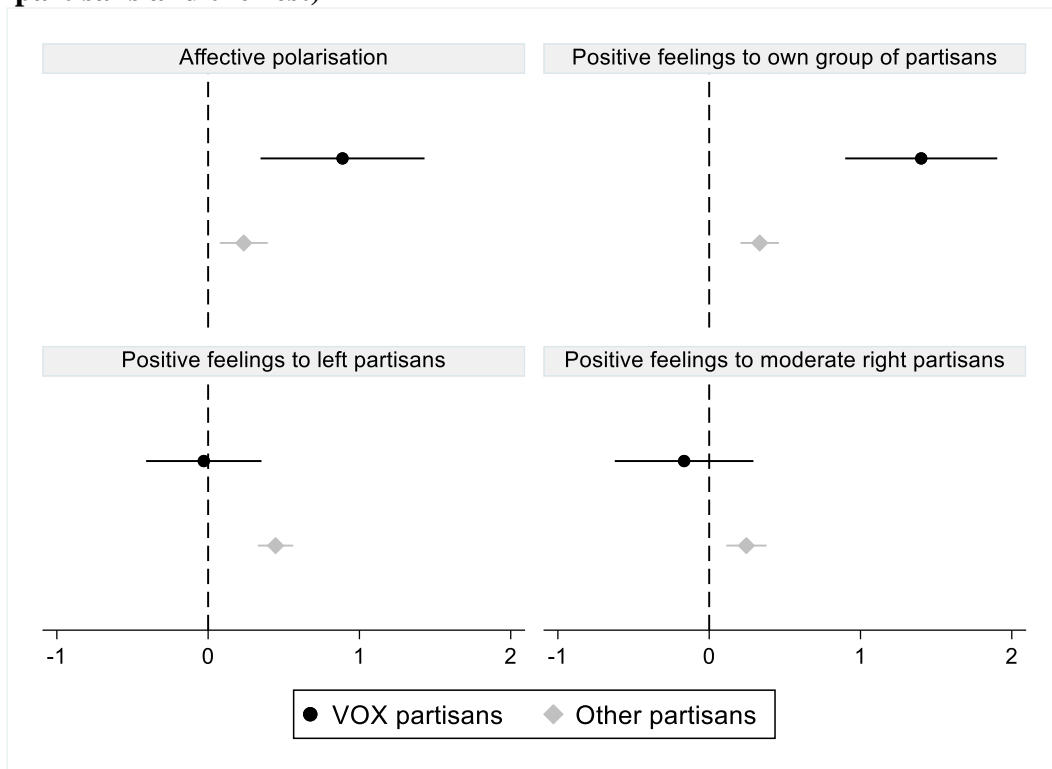
We have also reproduced the same models by using PSOE and UP partisans (Tables A5 and A6 and Figure A3 in the Appendix). The results are very weak and tend to be nonsignificant.

Next, we focus on H3, according to which the affective polarisation of those who switched their support to VOX should experience an increase due to the strengthening of their in-group liking. Because the literature supports that elections fuel affective polarisation and that this effect is partially mediated by positive party attachments (Hernández et al. 2021), empirical evidence is necessary to support that the increase in in-group liking among those who become VOX partisans is not simply the product of a possible general positive effect exerted by the electoral campaign. To achieve that objective, we have implemented several respondent fixed effects linear models with different feelings about partisans as the dependent variable that include, as independent variables, a wave dummy with value 1 for wave 3 (post VOX's emergence) and value 0 for wave 1 (pre VOX's emergence) and an interaction term between the wave dummy and another dummy distinguishing those who switched their in-group to VOX (1) from the partisans of the remaining main Spanish parties (0). The models also include the aforementioned control variables (see descriptive statistics in Table A7 in the Appendix).

The top graph on the left in Figure 2 shows the main results of a model with affective polarisation as the dependent variable (Model 1 of Table A8 in the Appendix). The increase in affective polarisation after the emergence of VOX is stronger among those who switched their in-group to VOX than among the remaining partisans. The results of a second model with sentiments towards their own partisan group as the dependent variable are shown in the top graph on the right (Model 2 of Table A8 in the Appendix): as expected, although the increase in in-group liking is 1.40 scale points (of 11) among those who become VOX supporters, this increase is 0.33 points among the rest. Finally, we have implemented two other models, one with positive feelings towards left-wing party voters and the other towards moderate right party voters, as dependent variables (Models 3 and 4 of Table A8 in the Appendix). The graphs on the bottom in Figure 3 show the main results, confirming that these feelings scales do not experience any change among individuals who become VOX partisans, but they increase among the rest.

H3, hence, obtains support from the results. Positive sentiments towards their own group (and, in turn, affective polarisation) among individuals who switched their support to VOX increase after the emergence of VOX in Andalucía, and this increase is much greater than that of partisans of the remaining main parties. To provide additional evidence, we have implemented the same models but compared individuals who switched their in-group to VOX with those of the remaining parties who switched their in-group to another party (e.g. from UP in wave 1 to PSOE in wave 3). The results show that the former continues to experience a greater increase in their positive sentiments towards their own group than the latter does (Table A9 and Figure A4 in the Appendix).

Figure 2. Changes in feelings about partisans between waves 3 (post VOX’s emergence) and 1 (pre VOX’s emergence), by partisan groups (VOX partisans and the rest)



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Table A8.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

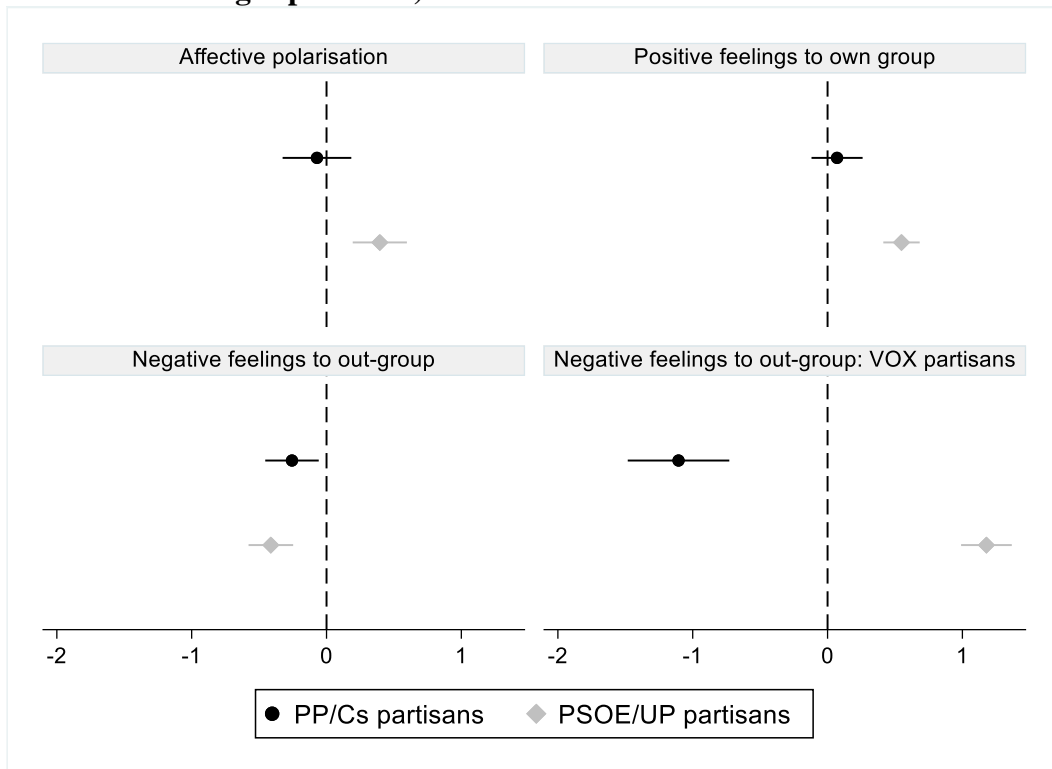
Finally, we focus on H4. Our observation should be that after the rise of VOX in Andalucía, there is a greater increase in affective polarisation among partisans of left-wing parties than among partisans of moderate right parties. For simplicity, we test H4 by comparing two ideological blocs of partisans: those whose most-liked group is PSOE or

UP voters and those whose most-liked group is PP or Cs voters. Moreover, for the main analyses, we select those respondents whose most-liked group is consistently conformed by left partisans, or moderate right partisans, in both panel waves; the few respondents who change their in-group between the two selected waves across ideological blocs, hence, are not considered here.

We start the analysis by comparing the mean like–dislike feelings of the two groups of partisans towards VOX voters at wave 3. Left-wing partisans evaluate VOX voters with a liking score of 0.89, much lower than their mean evaluation of moderate right party voters (2.51); by contrast, moderate right partisans evaluate VOX voters with a liking score of 4.73, higher than their mean evaluation of left-wing party voters (3.85). In line with the aforementioned theoretical arguments, VOX’s supporters generate more antipathy among left-wing partisans than among moderate right partisans.

To properly test H4, we have implemented, again, several respondent fixed effects models with different feelings about partisans as the dependent variable; for the independent variables, the models include the wave dummy and an interaction term between the wave dummy and a dummy variable distinguishing left-wing partisans (1) from moderate right partisans (0). The control variables described above are included in the models (see descriptive statistics in Table A10 in the Appendix). The top graph on the left in Figure 3 displays the increase in affective polarisation conditioned by the group of partisans (Model 1 of Table A11 in the Appendix). In line with H4, affective polarisation experiences a significant increase in approximately 0.40 points after the emergence of VOX among left-wing partisans but not among moderate right partisans. In a second model, positive sentiments towards the party voters of their own ideological bloc is included as the dependent variable (Model 2 of Table A11 in the Appendix). For a PSOE or UP partisan, this variable measures his/her (weighted) mean positive sentiments towards the voters of PSOE and UP; for a PP or Cs partisan, the variable captures his/her (weighted) mean positive feelings towards the voters of PP and Cs. The main results are displayed in the top graph on the right: as expected, left-wing partisans experience a significant increase in their positive sentiments towards the voters of PSOE and UP between the two waves, and the same is not true for right-wing partisans with respect to their feelings towards PP and Cs voters.

Figure 3. Changes in feelings about partisans between waves 3 (post VOX's emergence) and 1 (pre VOX's emergence), by partisan groups (left-wing and moderate right partisans)



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Table A11.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

A third model explores the changes in negative feelings towards the party voters of the other bloc; that is, for a PSOE or UP partisan, it measures his/her (weighted) mean negative sentiments towards PP and Cs voters and for partisans of PP or Cs, it measures the mean negative feelings towards PSOE and UP voters (Model 3 of Table A11 in the Appendix). The results displayed in the bottom left graph demonstrate that left-wing partisans decrease their negative feelings towards voters of moderate right parties after the emergence of VOX and vice versa. These findings might suggest that VOX's success may have reduced the affective distance between supporters of the left and supporters of the moderate right. Finally, we have conducted the last model; it has a dependent variable that compares the respondent's negative feelings towards VOX voters at wave 3 with the negative sentiments towards the corresponding out-group at wave 1; that is, this variable compares, for a PSOE or UP (PP or Cs) partisan, the negative feelings towards the voters of VOX at wave 3 with the mean negative sentiments towards the voters of the mainstream right (left) parties at wave 1 (Model 4 of Table A11 in the Appendix). The results in the bottom-right graph confirm that left-wing partisans evaluate VOX voters at

wave 3 worse than moderate right voters at wave 1 and moderate right partisans feel less antipathy towards the supporters of VOX than towards those of left-wing parties in the prior wave.

In summary, the results suggest that left-wing partisans react to the success of VOX by reinforcing, in a defensive reaction, the positive sentiments towards their own group and, simultaneously, generate strong feelings of rejection towards the radical right, resulting in higher levels of affective polarisation. By contrast, supporters of moderate right parties do not experience any significant increase in their affective polarisation: their in-group positive feelings do not increase and the levels of antipathy towards the radical right are less pronounced.

3.5.1. Robustness checks

First, we check that the results are robust to an alternative specification of the partisan groups. As previously mentioned, we have alternatively defined the different partisan groups based on party identification and, for those not identified with any of the main Spanish parties, vote choice⁶. The number of respondents included in the analyses is somewhat lower than that in the main analyses because the criteria to be classified in a specific in-group are more demanding. The main results of the estimated models remain fundamentally unaltered (Tables A12–A16 and Figures A5–A9 in the Appendix).

Second, we check that the results obtained for H3 and H4 are robust to an alternative model estimator. We have conducted random-effects linear regressions with the different feelings about partisans as the dependent variable that contains, as independent variables, the wave dummy, the corresponding group of partisans dummy, the interaction term between both dummies, the ideological and attitudinal variables mentioned above and some sociodemographic factors (sex, age and education). Standard errors are clustered on

⁶ In wave 1, we assign the in-group to the respondents who are not identified with any main party based on their reported vote choice in the last 2016 general elections; in wave 3, we use vote intention in the next 2019 general elections. Moreover, for those who do not report the vote for any of the main Spanish political parties, we use a third variable to assign them a specific group. In wave 1, a survey question that asks respondents which party they would have voted in the last general elections if they had participated in it is employed; in wave 3, we use the probabilities to vote by assigning respondents to their highest PTV.

respondents. The models present very similar results to those of the main analyses (Tables A17–A19 and Figures A10–A12 in the Appendix).

Third, we have re-estimated the models that test H4 by defining the left-wing and moderate right partisan groups solely on the basis of the most-liked group of voters at wave 1. In this manner, the models include the few respondents who change their in-group between waves 1 and 3 across ideological blocs and who were discarded in the main analyses. The results remain the same (Table A20 and Figure A13 in the Appendix).

3.6. Conclusions

The literature has suggested a positive relationship between the rise of RRPs and affective polarisation (e.g. Gidron et al. 2020; Meléndez and Kaltwasser 2021). This paper contributes by clarifying this relationship by, first, developing a theoretical framework of the affective roots and consequences of the initial electoral success of RRPs and, second, testing it for the case of VOX in Spain, using a panel dataset conducted during the emergence of this RRP.

We argue, first, that the emergence of RRPs could be the result of prior competition dynamics between mainstream parties around cultural and social issues and, particularly, of polarising strategies developed by moderate right parties, which increase the resentment of a portion of their electorate towards left-wing parties and their supporters. Moreover, this increase in out-group dislike could be accompanied by a sentiment of political discontent among a portion of the moderate right supporters, who feel that the mainstream right is unable to deliver on its promises (Bonikowski and Ziblatt 2019). Consequently, the rise of RRPs should be preceded, among moderate right partisans, by high levels of negative feelings towards left-wing partisans and low levels of positive affective attachments towards their own group of partisans. The study of the Spanish case seems to confirm these expectations: moderate right partisans holding, before the emergence of VOX, high levels of dislike sentiments towards supporters of PSOE and UP and low levels of positive sentiments towards their own group are more likely to become VOX partisans some months later. These results are congruent with some of the political dynamics affecting the Spanish centre-right parties before the rise of the radical right.

Second, the electoral emergence of the radical right is expected to fuel affective polarisation among the population, although because of different reasons and to a different degree across partisan groups. To the extent that the irruption of an RRP provides an attractive alternative electoral option to a portion of the moderate right electorate disaffected with existing centre-right parties, these latter may switch their support to these parties and experience an increase in their in-group liking. We find empirical evidence in favour of this expectation in Spain. Regarding the other partisan groups, we argue that the radical right's success should fuel affective polarisation in a greater degree among supporters of left parties than among supporters of centre-right parties, because RRP represents a more direct threat to the core values and beliefs defended by the former (e.g. Huddy et al. 2015). The study of the Spanish case shows, in line with the expectations, that left-wing partisans experience an increase in affective polarisation after the irruption of VOX in Andalucía but that moderate right partisans do not change their polarisation levels.

The main limitation of this paper is the external validity of the results. Some of the characteristics and dynamics of the Spanish party system surrounding the emergence of VOX may be quite different in other contexts. For example, while Spanish centre-right parties were open to collaborate with VOX, moderate right parties in some other countries denied any collaboration with the rising RRP. It seems plausible to argue that the differential impact of the emergence of the radical right on affective polarisation between supporters of the centre-right and the left may be weaker in the latter contexts, because moderate right partisans may view the RRP as a greater threat. There is also a relevant variety of RRPs. VOX has a more right-wing profile on economic or moral issues compared to other RRPs in Western Europe, which may make this party more attractive to supporters of centre-right parties and more hateful to left-wing partisans. Thus, testing the theoretical framework and the expectations derived from it for other cases and contexts is necessary. Further research should conduct similar analyses for other recently rising RRPs in Western Europe, such as Alternative for Germany, Chega in Portugal or, some years before, Sweden Democrats.

Moreover, the relevant question of the long-term affective effects of the radical right's success remains unexplored. In this paper, we have explored the short-term consequences of the emergence of VOX on affective polarisation across partisan groups; however, are

these effects perdurable in the long term? Or, by contrast, do they tend to lessen over time? Additional data and research are necessary.

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Appendix

Content:

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1.2 H3

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2. Robustness checks - Tables and figures

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2.3 Partisan groups (left-wing partisans and moderate right partisans) defined at wave 1 (H4)

3. Weights

1. Main analyses - Tables and figures

1.1 H1 & H2

Table A1. Descriptive statistics. Only moderate right partisans are considered

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Vox partisan_3	485	0.204	-	0	1
Negative feelings to left-wing partisans_1	485	6.621	2.193	0	10
Negative feelings to other right partisans_1	485	4.433	2.373	0	10
Positive feelings to own group_1	485	7.170	2.139	0	10
Left-right self-placement_1	485	6.128	1.780	0	10
Anti-immigration attitudes	485	7.804	2.215	0	10
Anti-decentralization attitudes	485	6.847	3.199	0	10
Female_1	485	0.427	-	0	1
Age_1	485	46.307	13.534	19	79
Education: Lower secondary or less_1	485	0.146	-	0	1
Education: Upper secondary_1	485	0.419	-	0	1
Education: Bachelor or more_1	485	0.435	-	0	1

Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Table A2. Logistic regression. Becoming VOX partisan at wave 3 as dependent variable. Only moderate right partisans are considered

DV: Vox partisan_3	Model 1
Negative feelings to left-wing partisans_1	0.283** (0.073)
Negative feelings to other right partisans_1	-0.091 (0.074)
Positive feelings to own group_1	-0.205* (0.079)
Left-right self-placement_1	0.310** (0.080)
Anti-immigration attitudes_1	0.231** (0.077)
Anti-decentralization attitudes_1	0.109* (0.045)
Female_1	-0.741** (0.285)
Age_1	-0.019+ (0.011)
Education: Upper secondary_1	-1.051** (0.372)
Education: Bachelor or more_1	-0.573 (0.370)
Constant	-4.375** (1.193)
Observations	485
R2	0.208

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Table A3. Linear regression. Negative feelings towards left-wing partisans as dependent variable. Only moderate right partisans are considered

DV: Negative feelings to left-wing partisans_1	Model 1
Left-right self-placement_1	0.235** (0.053)
Anti-immigration attitudes_1	0.264** (0.044)
Anti-decentralization attitudes_1	0.073* (0.030)
Female_1	0.228 (0.195)
Age_1	0.001 (0.007)
Education: Upper secondary_1	-0.436 (0.286)
Education: Bachelor or more_1	-0.489+ (0.290)
Constant	2.863** (0.600)
Observations	485
R2	0.158

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Table A4. Linear regression. Positive feelings towards the own partisan group as dependent variable. Only moderate right partisans are considered

DV: Positive feelings to own group_1	Model 1
Left-right self-placement_1	0.274** (0.054)
Anti-immigration attitudes_1	0.048 (0.045)
Anti-decentralization attitudes_1	0.044 (0.031)
Female_1	0.323 (0.199)
Age_1	0.007 (0.008)
Education: Upper secondary_1	-0.120 (0.293)
Education: Bachelor or more_1	0.069 (0.297)
Constant	4.371** (0.613)
Observations	485
R2	0.075

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Table A5. Descriptive statistics. Only left-wing partisans are considered

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Vox partisan_3	757	0.020	-	0	1
Negative feelings to right-wing partisans_1	757	7.768	2.226	0	10
Negative feelings to other left partisans_1	757	5.040	2.397	0	10
Positive feelings to own group_1	757	7.334	2.056	0	10
Left-right self-placement_1	757	2.588	1.827	0	10
Anti-immigration attitudes_1	757	5.779	2.535	0	10
Anti-decentralization attitudes_1	757	3.590	3.201	0	10
Female_1	757	0.468	-	0	1
Age_1	757	44.075	13.810	18	82
Education: Lower secondary or less_1	757	0.173	-	0	1
Education: Upper secondary_1	757	0.391	-	0	1
Education: Bachelor or more_1	757	0.436	-	0	1

Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

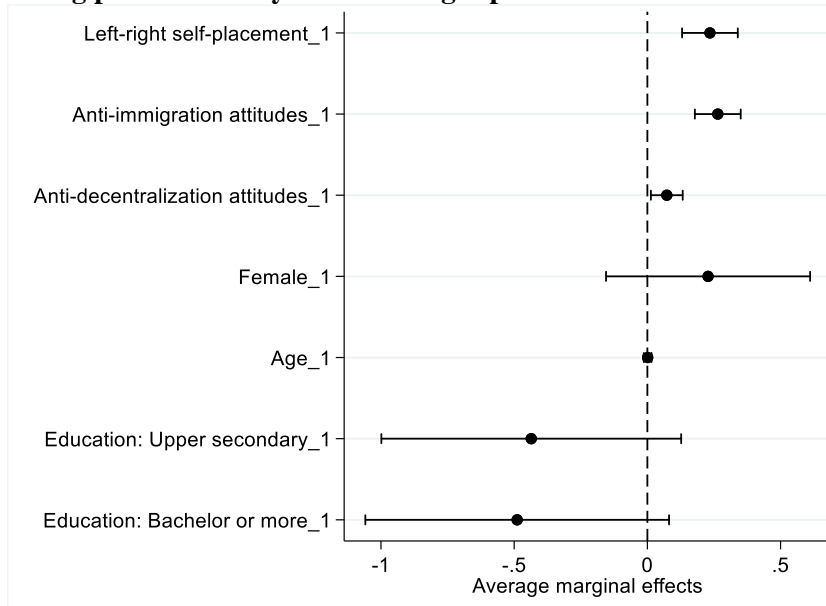
Table A6. Logistic regression. Becoming VOX partisan at wave 3 as dependent variable. Only left-wing partisans are considered.

DV: Vox partisan_3	Model 1
Negative feelings to right-wing partisans_1	-0.117 (0.147)
Negative feelings to other left partisans_1	0.098 (0.149)
Positive feelings to own group_1	-0.220 (0.151)
Left-right self-placement_1	0.350* (0.167)
Anti-immigration attitudes_1	0.226+ (0.133)
Anti-decentralization attitudes_1	0.055 (0.091)
Female_1	-0.918 (0.601)
Age_1	-0.046* (0.023)
Education: Upper secondary_1	-1.344+ (0.745)
Education: Bachelor or more_1	-1.002 (0.711)
Constant	-1.994 (2.419)
Observations	757
R2	0.226

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

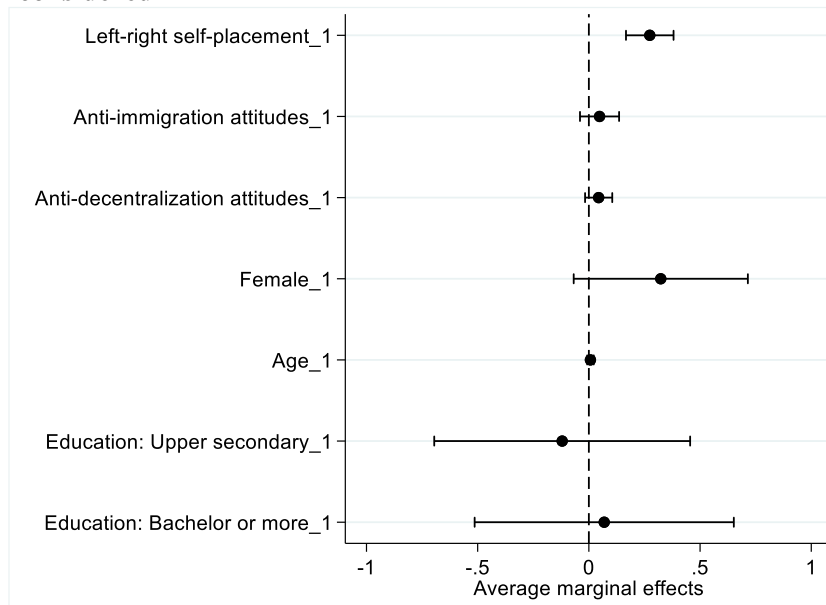
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Figure A1. Marginal effects of ideological and sociodemographic variables on negative feelings towards left-wing partisans. Only moderate right partisans are considered



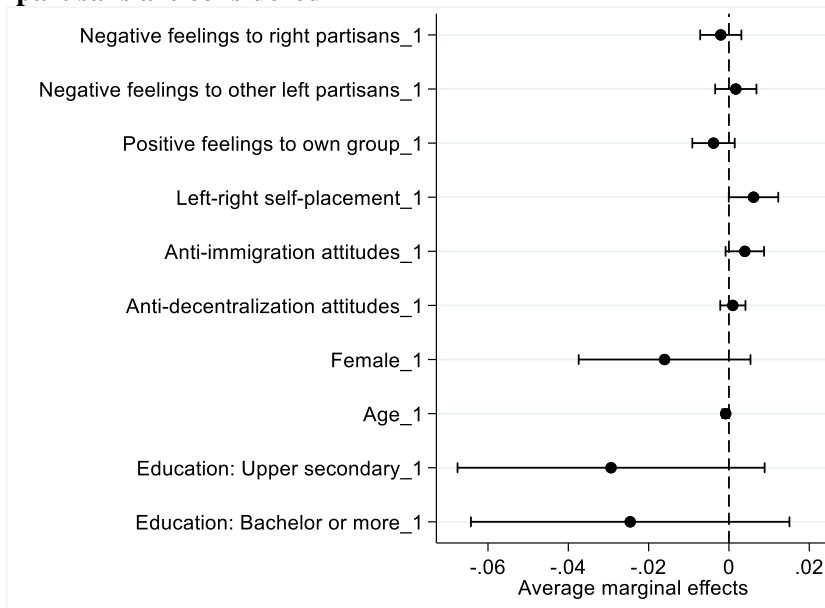
Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Model 1 in Table A3.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Figure A2. Marginal effects of ideological and sociodemographic variables on positive feelings towards the own partisan group. Only moderate right partisans are considered



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Model 1 in Table A4.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Figure A3. Marginal effects of feelings about partisans on the probability of becoming a VOX partisan. Only left-wing partisans are considered



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Model 1 in Table A6.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

1.2 H3

Table A7. Descriptive statistics (N=2468 respondent-waves nested in 1234 respondents)

Variables	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Affective polarisation	4.332	2.645	0	10
Positive feelings to own group	7.513	2.054	0	10
Positive feelings to left partisans	5.270	2.509	0	10
Positive feelings to right partisans	3.956	2.855	0	10
Ideological extremism	2.114	1.495	0.022	6.083
Left-right self-placement	3.916	2.589	0	10
Immigration extremism	2.223	1.437	0.036	6.576
Anti-immigration attitudes	6.275	2.664	0	10
Decentralization extremism	2.950	1.834	0.273	5.417
Anti-decentralization attitudes	4.804	3.472	0	10
Vox Partisan	0.091	-	0	1
Variables	Mean change	SD change	Min. change	Max. change
Affective polarisation	0.360	2.480	-10	10
Positive feelings to own group	0.500	2.102	-7	10
Positive feelings to left partisans	0.437	1.900	-7.607	9.500
Positive feelings to right partisans	0.235	2.092	-8.5	10
Ideological extremism	0.183	1.222	-5.895	6.061
Left-right self-placement	-0.111	1.685	-10	10
Immigration extremism	0.053	1.419	-6.113	5.960
Anti-immigration attitudes	-0.613	1.818	-10	8
Decentralization extremism	-0.221	1.805	-4.855	5.145
Anti-decentralization attitudes	-0.126	2.778	-10	10
Vox Partisan	-	-	-	-

Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Table A8. Respondent fixed effects linear models. Different feelings about partisans as dependent variables. Those who switched to Vox vs. the rest of partisans

	M1: Affective polarisation	M2: Positive feelings to own group	M3: Positive feelings to left partisans	M4: Positive feelings to mod. right partisans
Wave3	0.236** (0.081)	0.334** (0.065)	0.446** (0.059)	0.246** (0.068)
Wave3 X VoxPartisan	0.653* (0.291)	1.068** (0.269)	-0.474* (0.204)	-0.412+ (0.246)
Ideological extremism	0.147* (0.060)	0.148** (0.050)	0.015 (0.051)	0.056 (0.057)
Left-right self-placement	-0.087* (0.044)	-0.092* (0.036)	-0.103** (0.035)	0.016 (0.044)
Immigration extremism	-0.019 (0.054)	-0.025 (0.044)	-0.017 (0.041)	-0.014 (0.047)
Anti-immigration attitudes	-0.047 (0.043)	-0.049 (0.034)	-0.014 (0.034)	-0.030 (0.037)
Decentralization extremism	0.000 (0.044)	-0.009 (0.035)	-0.037 (0.036)	-0.004 (0.038)
Anti-decentralization attitudes	-0.002 (0.028)	-0.012 (0.022)	-0.036 (0.023)	0.005 (0.024)
Constant	4.563** (0.394)	7.796** (0.356)	5.848** (0.324)	3.884** (0.373)
Observations	2,468	2,468	2,468	2,468
Number of id	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
R-squared (within)	0.035	0.085	0.070	0.017

Notes: Standard errors clustered on individuals in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

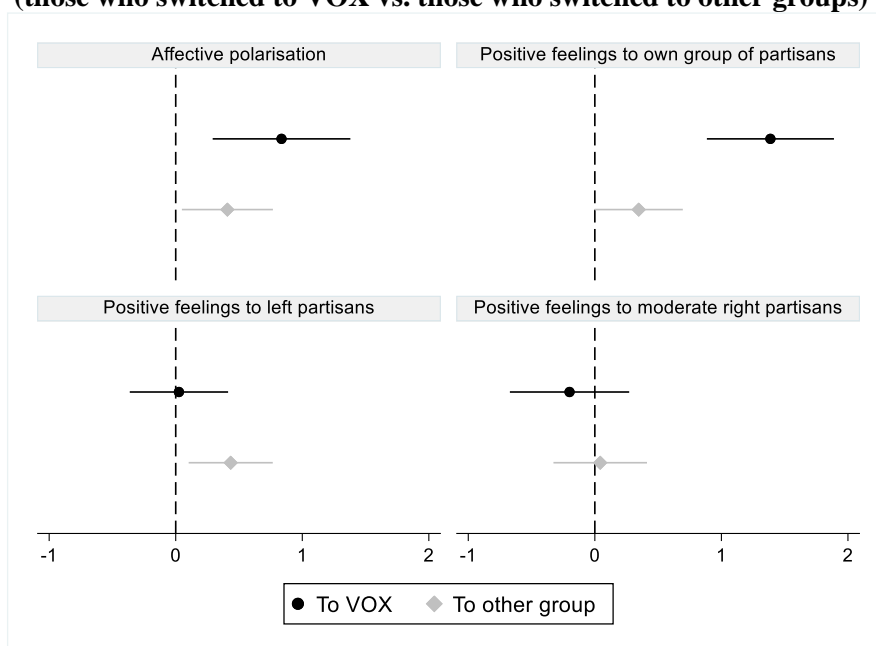
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Table A9. Respondent fixed effects linear models. Different feelings about partisans as dependent variables. Those who switched to VOX vs. those who switched to other groups

	M1: Affective polarisation	M2: Positive feelings to own group	M3: Positive feelings to left partisans	M4: Positive feelings to mod. right partisans
Wave3	0.408* (0.183)	0.347+ (0.178)	0.434* (0.170)	0.043 (0.189)
Wave3 X VoxPartisan	0.428 (0.344)	1.041** (0.327)	-0.409 (0.257)	-0.243 (0.318)
Ideological extremism	0.394** (0.106)	0.326** (0.096)	0.060 (0.108)	0.026 (0.115)
Left-right self-placement	-0.261** (0.082)	-0.217** (0.067)	-0.147* (0.070)	0.093 (0.087)
Immigration extremism	-0.040 (0.100)	-0.116 (0.094)	-0.129 (0.101)	-0.064 (0.113)
Anti-immigration attitudes	0.005 (0.068)	-0.068 (0.067)	-0.046 (0.084)	-0.177* (0.083)
Decentralization extremism	-0.061 (0.088)	-0.115 (0.085)	-0.159 (0.097)	-0.059 (0.093)
Anti-decentralization attitudes	0.030 (0.054)	0.010 (0.049)	-0.061 (0.052)	0.046 (0.052)
Constant	4.030** (0.797)	8.291** (0.857)	6.263** (0.795)	5.881** (0.877)
Observations	626	626	626	626
Number of id	313	313	313	313
R-squared (within)	0.131	0.183	0.096	0.032

Notes: Standard errors clustered on individuals in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Figure A4. Changes in feelings about partisans between wave 3 (post VOX's emergence) and 1 (pre VOX's emergence), by partisan groups (those who switched to VOX vs. those who switched to other groups)



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Table A9.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

1.3 H4

Table A10. Descriptive statistics (N=2090 respondent-waves nested in 1045 respondents)

Variables	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Affective polarisation	4.432	2.613	0	10
Positive feelings to own group	6.496	1.852	0	10
Negative feelings to out-group	7.225	2.292	0	10
Negative feelings to out-group: VOX	7.630	2.565	0	10
Ideological extremism	2.052	1.384	0.022	6.083
Left-right self-placement	3.545	2.440	0	10
Immigration extremism	2.192	1.437	0.036	6.576
Anti-immigration attitudes	6.040	2.627	0	10
Decentralization extremism	2.857	1.806	0.273	5.417
Anti-decentralization attitudes	4.449	3.376	0	10
Left-wing Partisan	0.675	-	0	1
Variables	Mean change	SD change	Min. change	Max. change
Affective polarisation	0.279	2.410	-10	8.621
Positive feelings to own group	0.430	1.749	-7	6.962
Negative feelings to out-group	-0.342	2.003	-10	8.5
Negative feelings to out-group: VOX	0.468	2.942	-10	10
Ideological extremism	0.138	1.111	-4.061	5.105
Left-right self-placement	-0.124	1.505	-10	10
Immigration extremism	0.044	1.413	-5.540	5.960
Anti-immigration attitudes	-0.637	1.791	-10	8
Decentralization extremism	-0.259	1.796	-4.855	5.145
Anti-decentralization attitudes	-0.210	2.731	-10	10
Left-wing Partisan	-	-	-	-

Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Table A11. Respondent fixed effects linear models. Different feelings about partisans as dependent variables. Left-wing partisans vs. moderate right partisans

	M1: Affective polarisation	M2: Positive feelings to own group	M3: Negative feelings to out-group	M4: Negative feelings to out-group: VOX
Wave3	-0.071 (0.130)	0.070 (0.097)	-0.256* (0.101)	-1.105** (0.192)
Wave3 X LeftPartisan	0.466** (0.160)	0.478** (0.115)	-0.157 (0.129)	2.284** (0.211)
Ideological extremism	0.103 (0.064)	0.099* (0.048)	-0.009 (0.057)	-0.156+ (0.089)
Left-right self-placement	-0.015 (0.044)	-0.039 (0.038)	0.021 (0.039)	-0.028 (0.071)
Immigration extremism	0.003 (0.059)	0.017 (0.042)	0.026 (0.047)	-0.101 (0.064)
Anti-immigration attitudes	-0.031 (0.049)	-0.015 (0.032)	-0.021 (0.040)	-0.086+ (0.048)
Decentralization extremism	0.007 (0.045)	-0.016 (0.032)	-0.039 (0.039)	0.020 (0.049)
Anti-decentralization attitudes	-0.002 (0.030)	-0.018 (0.022)	0.004 (0.025)	-0.029 (0.032)
Constant	4.329** (0.417)	6.412** (0.305)	7.515** (0.351)	8.639** (0.483)
Observations	2,090	2,090	2,090	2,090
Number of id	1,045	1,045	1,045	1,045
R-squared (within)	0.024	0.079	0.032	0.171

Notes: Standard errors clustered on individuals in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

2. Robustness checks – Tables and figures

2.1 Alternative definition of partisan groups

Table A12. Logistic regression. Becoming VOX partisan at wave 3 as dependent variable. Only moderate right partisans are considered

DV: Vox partisan_3	Model 1
Negative feelings to left-wing partisans_1	0.233** (0.073)
Negative feelings to other right partisans_1	-0.077 (0.071)
Positive feelings to own group_1	-0.252** (0.075)
Left-right self-placement_1	0.352** (0.086)
Anti-immigration attitudes_1	0.258** (0.081)
Anti-decentralization attitudes_1	0.127* (0.049)
Female_1	-0.849** (0.300)
Age_1	-0.017 (0.011)
Education: Upper secondary_1	-0.835* (0.387)
Education: Bachelor or more_1	-0.649+ (0.390)
Constant	-4.626** (1.201)
Observations	467
R2	0.214

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Table A13. Logistic regression. Becoming VOX partisan at wave 3 as dependent variable. Only left-wing partisans are considered

DV: Vox partisan_3	Model 1
Negative feelings to right-wing partisans_1	-0.081 (0.139)
Negative feelings to other left partisans_1	0.216 (0.158)
Positive feelings to own group_1	-0.184 (0.156)
Left-right self-placement_1	0.310 (0.197)
Anti-immigration attitudes_1	0.419* (0.182)
Anti-decentralization attitudes_1	-0.054 (0.103)
Female_1	-1.740* (0.843)
Age_1	-0.031 (0.028)
Education: Upper secondary_1	-1.273 (0.857)
Education: Bachelor or more_1	-0.601 (0.845)
Constant	-4.896+ (2.762)
Observations	638
R2	0.332

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Table A14. Respondent fixed effects linear models. Different feelings about partisans as dependent variables. Those who switched to Vox vs. the rest of partisans

	M1: Affective polarisation	M2: Positive feelings to own group	M3: Positive feelings to left partisans	M4: Positive feelings to mod. right partisans
Wave3	0.205* (0.085)	0.305** (0.072)	0.452** (0.064)	0.228** (0.074)
Wave3 X VoxPartisan	0.841** (0.307)	1.266** (0.321)	-0.583* (0.231)	-0.259 (0.253)
Ideological extremism	0.178** (0.062)	0.169** (0.059)	0.010 (0.053)	0.028 (0.060)
Left-right self-placement	-0.119* (0.046)	-0.095* (0.045)	-0.114** (0.037)	0.036 (0.046)
Immigration extremism	-0.061 (0.057)	-0.066 (0.049)	-0.018 (0.043)	0.015 (0.051)
Anti-immigration attitudes	-0.056 (0.045)	-0.068+ (0.038)	-0.009 (0.037)	-0.050 (0.040)
Decentralization extremism	-0.001 (0.046)	-0.024 (0.040)	-0.034 (0.038)	-0.010 (0.041)
Anti-decentralization attitudes	-0.002 (0.028)	-0.009 (0.024)	-0.035 (0.024)	0.012 (0.025)
Constant	4.682** (0.411)	7.994** (0.394)	5.984** (0.358)	4.188** (0.407)
Observations	2,202	2,202	2,202	2,202
Number of id	1,101	1,101	1,101	1,101
R-squared (within)	0.044	0.087	0.069	0.016

Notes: Standard errors clustered on individuals in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Table A15. Respondent fixed effects linear models. Different feelings about partisans as dependent variables. Those who switched to VOX vs. those who switched to other groups

	M1: Affective polarisation	M2: Positive feelings to own group	M3: Positive feelings to left partisans	M4: Positive feelings to mod. right partisans
Wave3	0.373* (0.166)	0.284 (0.197)	0.450** (0.169)	-0.116 (0.172)
Wave3 X VoxPartisan	0.663+ (0.348)	1.276** (0.388)	-0.537+ (0.283)	0.033 (0.315)
Ideological extremism	0.275* (0.115)	0.269* (0.105)	0.012 (0.112)	0.040 (0.105)
Left-right self-placement	-0.276** (0.089)	-0.197* (0.091)	-0.155* (0.078)	0.148* (0.070)
Immigration extremism	-0.007 (0.097)	-0.184+ (0.104)	-0.142 (0.109)	-0.074 (0.115)
Anti-immigration attitudes	-0.010 (0.073)	-0.051 (0.084)	0.009 (0.095)	-0.160+ (0.092)
Decentralization extremism	-0.049 (0.083)	-0.141 (0.095)	-0.144+ (0.086)	-0.077 (0.081)
Anti-decentralization attitudes	0.043 (0.051)	0.062 (0.057)	0.001 (0.051)	0.011 (0.050)
Constant	4.140** (0.784)	7.804** (0.896)	5.744** (0.845)	5.741** (0.916)
Observations	596	596	596	596
Number of id	298	298	298	298
R-squared (within)	0.141	0.170	0.086	0.042

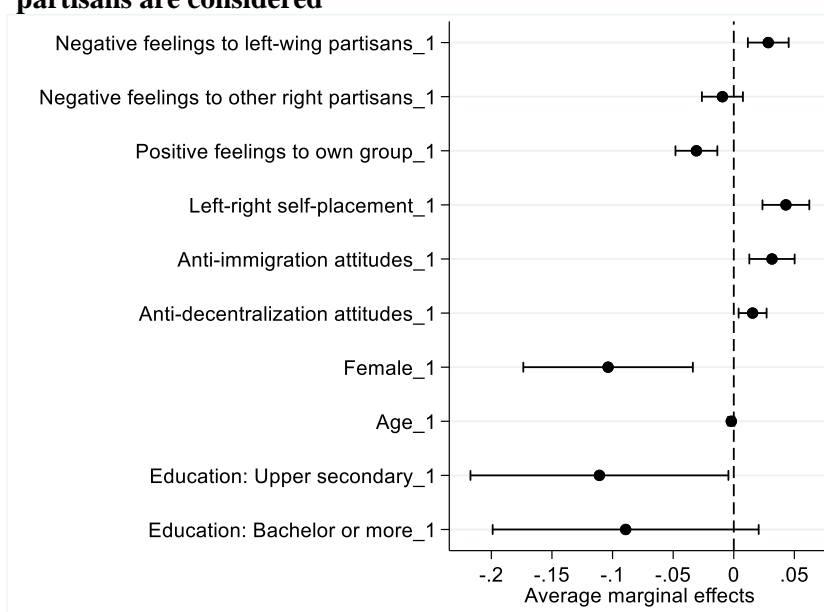
Notes: Standard errors clustered on individuals in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Table A16. Respondent fixed effects linear models. Different feelings about partisans as dependent variables. Left-wing partisans vs. moderate right partisans

	M1: Affective polarisation	M2: Positive feelings to own group	M3: Negative feelings to out-group	M4: Negative feelings to out-group: VOX
Wave3	-0.088 (0.131)	0.091 (0.107)	-0.288** (0.111)	-1.221** (0.201)
Wave3 X LeftPartisan	0.478** (0.167)	0.445** (0.129)	-0.115 (0.143)	2.483** (0.223)
Ideological extremism	0.163* (0.066)	0.100+ (0.058)	0.055 (0.058)	-0.102 (0.094)
Left-right self-placement	-0.023 (0.045)	-0.053 (0.042)	0.044 (0.047)	-0.001 (0.083)
Immigration extremism	-0.056 (0.064)	0.009 (0.044)	-0.022 (0.052)	-0.141* (0.069)
Anti-immigration attitudes	-0.041 (0.051)	-0.015 (0.034)	0.000 (0.043)	-0.105+ (0.054)
Decentralization extremism	0.015 (0.048)	-0.022 (0.034)	-0.024 (0.044)	0.035 (0.053)
Anti-decentralization attitudes	-0.006 (0.029)	-0.017 (0.024)	-0.001 (0.027)	-0.033 (0.036)
Constant	4.334** (0.447)	6.714** (0.355)	6.998** (0.399)	8.401** (0.561)
Observations	1,840	1,840	1,840	1,840
Number of id	920	920	920	920
R-squared (within)	0.028	0.071	0.031	0.173

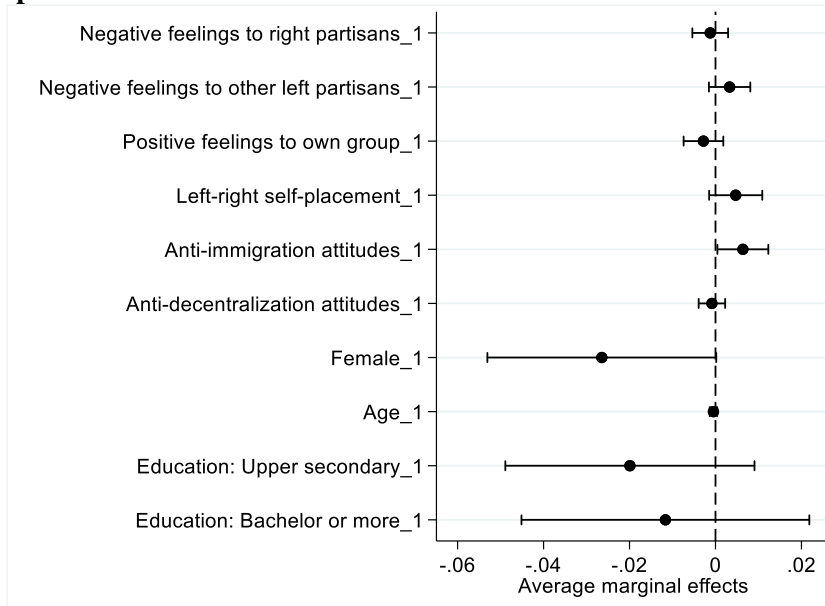
Notes: Standard errors clustered on individuals in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Figure A5. Marginal effects of feelings about partisans on the probability of becoming a VOX partisan. Only moderate right partisans are considered



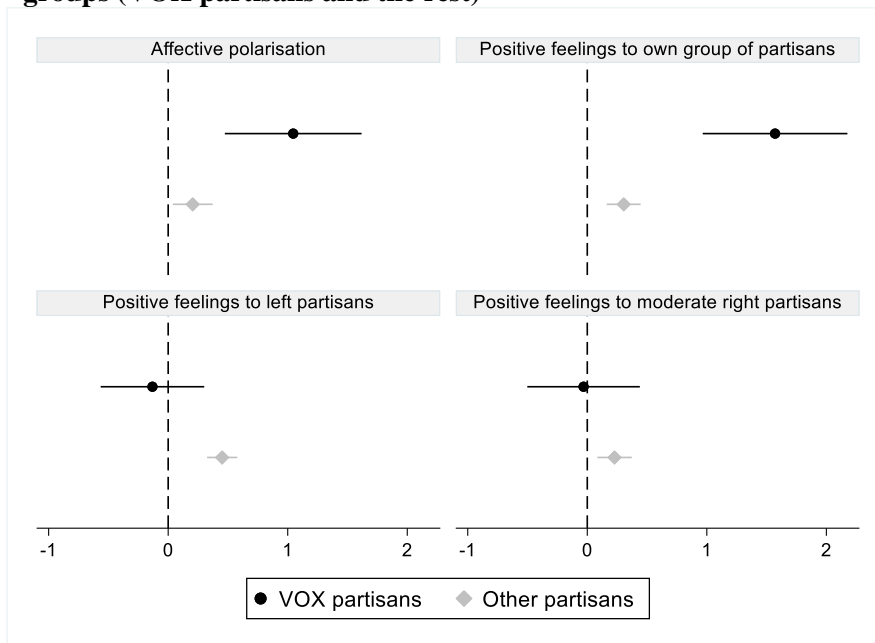
Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Model 1 in Table A12.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Figure A6. Marginal effects of feelings about partisans on the probability of becoming a VOX partisan. Only left-wing partisans are considered



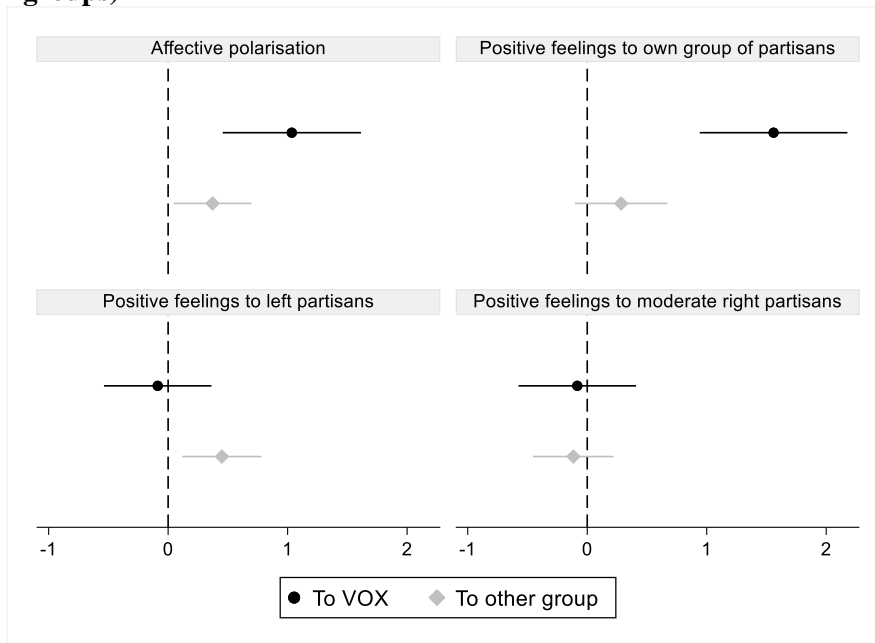
Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Model 1 in Table A13.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Figure A7. Changes in feelings about partisans between wave 3 (post VOX's emergence) and 1 (pre VOX's emergence), by partisan groups (VOX partisans and the rest)



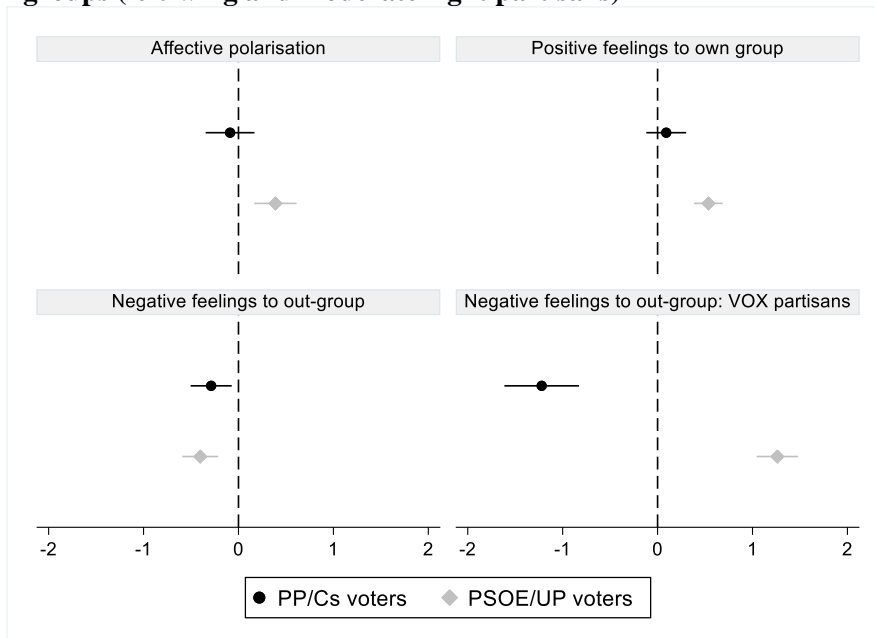
Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Table A14.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Figure A8. Changes in feelings about partisans between wave 3 (post VOX's emergence) and 1 (pre VOX's emergence), by partisan groups (those who switched to VOX vs. those who switched to other groups)



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Table A15.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Figure A9. Changes in feelings about partisans between wave 3 (post VOX's emergence) and 1 (pre VOX's emergence), by partisan groups (left-wing and moderate right partisans)



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Table A16.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

2.2 Random effects linear models (H3 & H4)

Table A17. Random effects linear models. Different feelings about partisans as dependent variables. Those who switched to VOX vs. the rest of partisans

	M1: Affective polarisation	M2: Positive feelings to own group	M3: Positive feelings to left partisans	M4: Positive feelings to mod. right partisans
Wave3	0.238** (0.078)	0.322** (0.062)	0.320** (0.059)	0.376** (0.068)
VoxPartisan	0.090 (0.265)	-0.523* (0.245)	-1.348** (0.216)	0.440+ (0.254)
Wave3 X VoxPartisan	0.530+ (0.285)	0.934** (0.266)	-0.222 (0.213)	-0.785** (0.273)
Ideological extremism	0.427** (0.038)	0.336** (0.031)	-0.025 (0.032)	0.041 (0.038)
Left-right self-placement	-0.240** (0.026)	-0.097** (0.020)	-0.320** (0.023)	0.479** (0.029)
Immigration extremism	0.131** (0.037)	0.066* (0.031)	-0.048 (0.032)	-0.022 (0.036)
Anti-immigration attitudes	0.029 (0.025)	-0.042* (0.020)	-0.137** (0.023)	0.030 (0.025)
Decentralization extremism	0.120** (0.030)	0.034 (0.024)	-0.079** (0.025)	-0.065* (0.027)
Anti-decentralization attitudes	-0.051** (0.017)	0.007 (0.014)	-0.058** (0.015)	0.153** (0.017)
Female	-0.090 (0.122)	-0.037 (0.096)	-0.128 (0.105)	0.280* (0.110)
Age	0.013** (0.004)	0.013** (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)
Education: Upper secondary	-0.383* (0.183)	-0.182 (0.140)	-0.041 (0.158)	0.194 (0.171)
Education: Bachelor or more	-0.211 (0.185)	-0.112 (0.147)	-0.027 (0.159)	0.112 (0.175)
Constant	3.353** (0.342)	6.581** (0.271)	7.893** (0.287)	0.650* (0.323)
Observations	2,468	2,468	2,468	2,468
Number of id	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
R-squared (overall)	0.198	0.132	0.372	0.419

Notes: Standard errors clustered on individuals in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Table A18. Random effects linear models. Different feelings about partisans as dependent variables. Those who switched to VOX vs. those who switched to other groups

	M1: Affective polarisation	M2: Positive feelings to own group	M3: Positive feelings to left partisans	M4: Positive feelings to mod. right partisans
Wave3	0.411* (0.177)	0.372* (0.171)	0.288+ (0.167)	0.257 (0.190)
VoxPartisan	0.780* (0.327)	0.008 (0.286)	-1.374** (0.278)	0.432 (0.299)
Wave3 X VoxPartisan	0.287 (0.334)	0.846** (0.316)	-0.254 (0.261)	-0.594+ (0.321)
Ideological extremism	0.528** (0.073)	0.404** (0.062)	0.074 (0.067)	-0.015 (0.078)
Left-right self-placement	-0.262** (0.056)	-0.119** (0.044)	-0.293** (0.052)	0.399** (0.065)
Immigration extremism	0.162* (0.071)	0.067 (0.060)	-0.047 (0.069)	-0.078 (0.083)
Anti-immigration attitudes	0.006 (0.044)	-0.113** (0.041)	-0.195** (0.048)	-0.068 (0.050)
Decentralization extremism	0.097 (0.060)	0.038 (0.052)	-0.061 (0.057)	-0.049 (0.058)
Anti-decentralization attitudes	-0.020 (0.036)	0.002 (0.032)	-0.094** (0.034)	0.139** (0.035)
Female	0.031 (0.255)	0.047 (0.194)	-0.186 (0.215)	0.243 (0.221)
Age	0.012 (0.009)	0.015* (0.007)	-0.001 (0.007)	0.017* (0.008)
Education: Upper secondary	-0.419 (0.312)	-0.097 (0.272)	0.220 (0.278)	0.331 (0.297)
Education: Bachelor or more	-0.327 (0.313)	0.156 (0.290)	0.375 (0.284)	0.555+ (0.315)
Constant	2.564** (0.577)	6.330** (0.477)	8.170** (0.518)	1.613** (0.567)
Observations	626	626	626	626
Number of id	313	313	313	313
R-squared (overall)	0.223	0.178	0.452	0.289

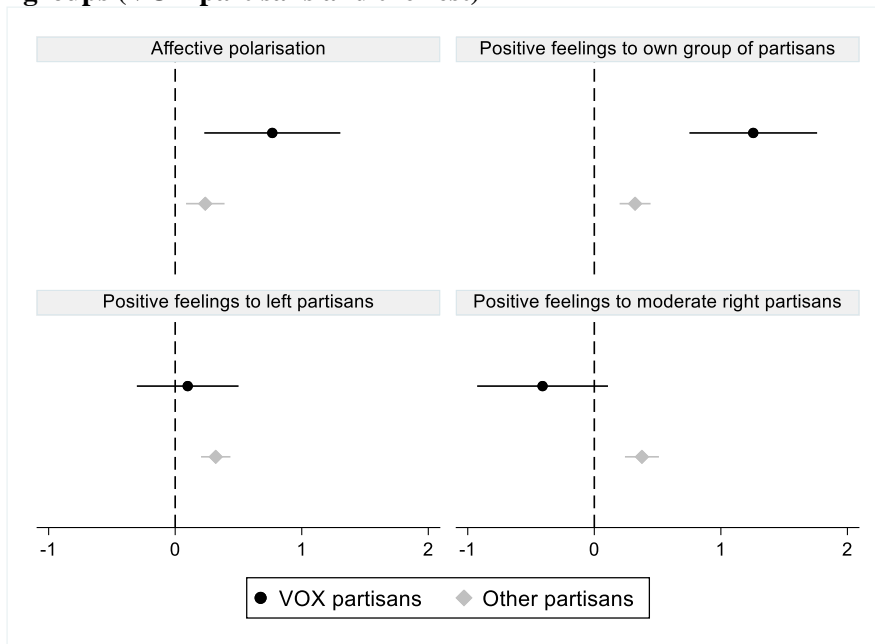
Notes: Standard errors clustered on individuals in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Table A19. Random effects linear models. Different feelings about partisans as dependent variables. Left-wing partisans vs. moderate right partisans

	M1: Affective polarisation	M2: Positive feelings to own group	M3: Negative feelings to out-group	M4: Negative feelings to out-group: VOX
Wave3	-0.077 (0.132)	0.028 (0.095)	-0.251* (0.104)	-1.083** (0.191)
LeftPartisan	0.963** (0.197)	-0.221 (0.153)	1.362** (0.186)	0.686** (0.194)
Wave3 X LeftPartisan	0.507** (0.162)	0.503** (0.115)	-0.111 (0.131)	2.297** (0.210)
Ideological extremism	0.404** (0.044)	0.218** (0.033)	0.229** (0.039)	0.018 (0.042)
Left-right self-placement	-0.118** (0.032)	-0.008 (0.028)	-0.046 (0.030)	-0.177** (0.035)
Immigration extremism	0.123** (0.041)	0.033 (0.031)	0.069* (0.035)	-0.020 (0.036)
Anti-immigration attitudes	0.052+ (0.027)	-0.042* (0.021)	0.062* (0.025)	0.025 (0.024)
Decentralization extremism	0.132** (0.032)	-0.027 (0.023)	0.101** (0.028)	0.087** (0.028)
Anti-decentralization attitudes	-0.021 (0.020)	0.021 (0.015)	-0.046** (0.017)	-0.078** (0.017)
Female	-0.090 (0.128)	-0.008 (0.101)	-0.174 (0.115)	-0.067 (0.102)
Age	0.013** (0.005)	0.013** (0.004)	0.003 (0.004)	-0.001 (0.004)
Education: Upper secondary	-0.290 (0.203)	-0.003 (0.152)	-0.038 (0.184)	-0.038 (0.159)
Education: Bachelor or more	-0.132 (0.210)	0.039 (0.160)	-0.057 (0.186)	0.150 (0.164)
Constant	2.026** (0.457)	5.589** (0.358)	5.492** (0.435)	7.545** (0.397)
Observations	2,090	2,090	2,090	2,090
Number of id	1,045	1,045	1,045	1,045
R-squared (overall)	0.211	0.070	0.173	0.324

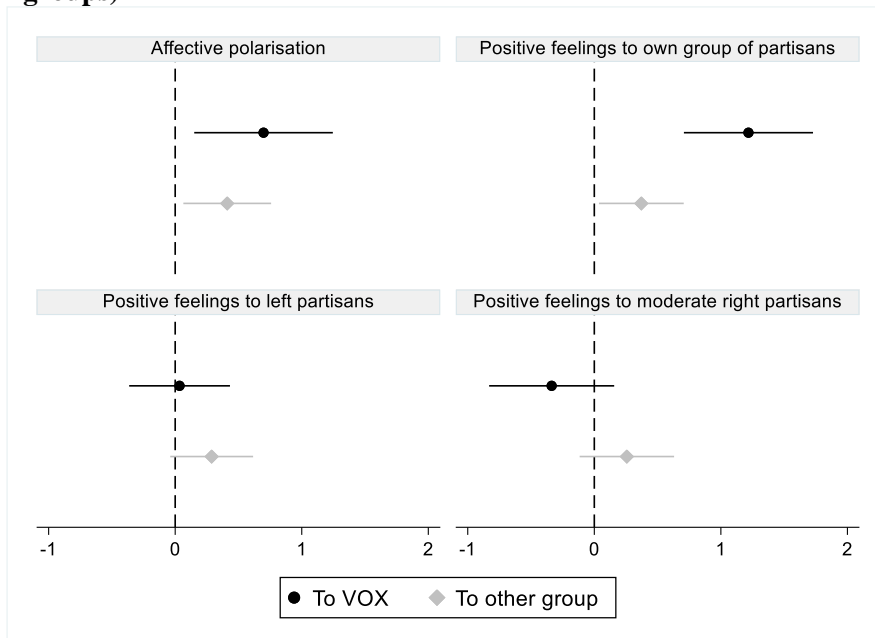
Notes: Standard errors clustered on individuals in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Figure A10. Changes in feelings about partisans between wave 3 (post VOX's emergence) and 1 (pre VOX's emergence), by partisan groups (VOX partisans and the rest)



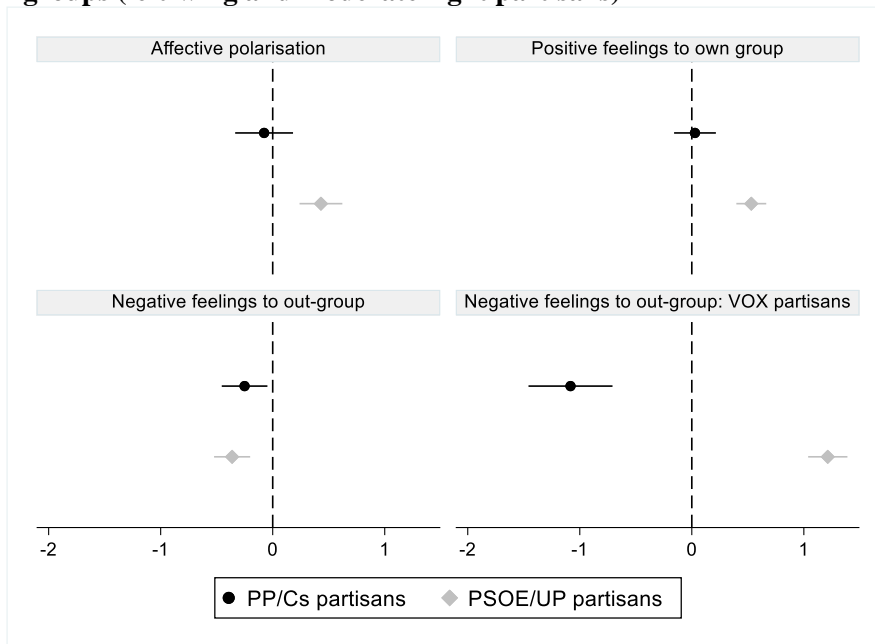
Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Table A17.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Figure A11. Changes in feelings about partisans between wave 3 (post VOX's emergence) and 1 (pre VOX's emergence), by partisan groups (those who switched to VOX vs. those who switched to other groups)



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Table A18.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Figure A12. Changes in feelings about partisans between wave 3 (post VOX's emergence) and 1 (pre VOX's emergence), by partisan groups (left-wing and moderate right partisans)



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Table A19.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

2.3 Partisan groups (left-wing partisans and moderate right partisans) defined at wave 1 (H4)

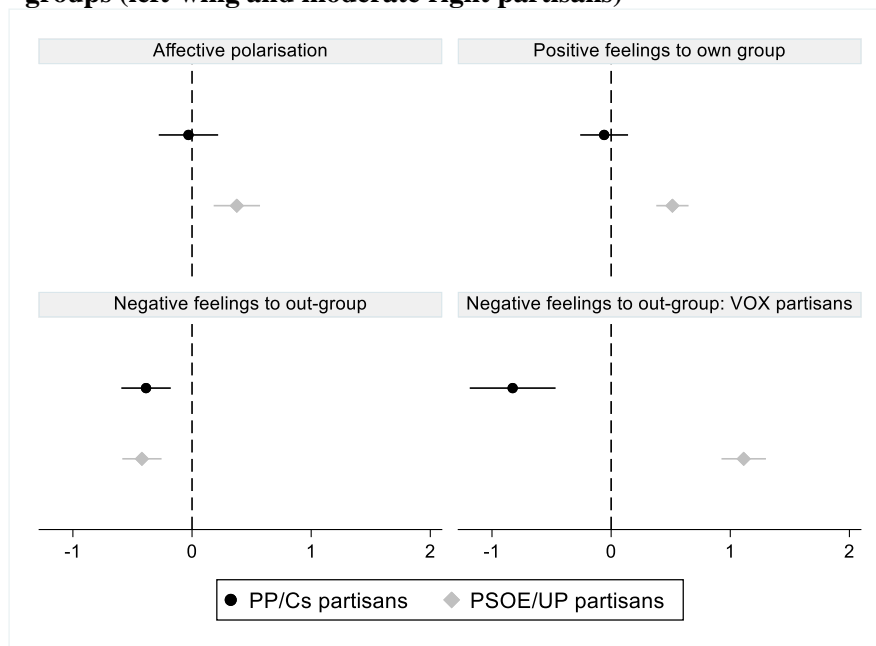
Table A20. Respondent fixed effects linear models. Different feelings about partisans as dependent variables. Left-wing partisans vs. moderate right partisans

	M1: Affective polarisation	M2: Positive feelings to own group	M3: Negative feelings to out-group	M4: Negative feelings to out-group: VOX
Wave3	-0.030 (0.127)	-0.059 (0.103)	-0.386** (0.106)	-0.827** (0.184)
Wave3 X LeftPartisan	0.406** (0.156)	0.573** (0.119)	-0.035 (0.132)	1.939** (0.203)
Ideological extremism	0.164* (0.064)	0.082 (0.050)	0.006 (0.060)	-0.117 (0.084)
Left-right self-placement	-0.048 (0.046)	-0.014 (0.040)	0.068 (0.042)	-0.091 (0.068)
Immigration extremism	-0.018 (0.057)	0.036 (0.043)	0.012 (0.047)	-0.117+ (0.063)
Anti-immigration attitudes	-0.044 (0.046)	-0.008 (0.035)	-0.011 (0.040)	-0.106* (0.047)
Decentralization extremism	-0.010 (0.044)	-0.033 (0.033)	0.011 (0.041)	0.031 (0.049)
Anti-decentralization attitudes	-0.011 (0.029)	-0.018 (0.023)	0.004 (0.025)	-0.032 (0.032)
Constant	4.419** (0.406)	6.261** (0.331)	7.002** (0.368)	8.821** (0.470)
Observations	2,242	2,242	2,242	2,242
Number of id	1,121	1,121	1,121	1,121
R-squared (within)	0.030	0.061	0.041	0.141

Notes: Standard errors clustered on individuals in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

Figure A13. Changes in feelings about partisans between wave 3 (post VOX's emergence) and 1 (pre VOX's emergence), by partisan groups (left-wing and moderate right partisans)



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Table A20.
Source: E-DEM, waves 1 and 3.

3. Weights

For the first wave of the E-DEM dataset, we have weighted each party voters' group by the weighted mean voting intention estimate of each party. Concretely, we have proceeded as follows:

First, we have used the list of electoral polls for the April 2019 Spanish general elections recollected by the Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_April_2019_Spanish_general_election#cite_note-8. Concretely, we have considered all the electoral polls performed 90 days before the first day of the wave's fieldwork. The first wave was performed between 25/10/2018 and 07/11/2018; therefore, we have considered all the electoral polls which last day of fieldwork was conducted between 27 July 2018 and 25 October 2018.

Second, we have calculated the mean voting intention estimate of each relevant party, weighted by three different factors (this is a free adaptation of the general rules described in El País: <https://elpais.com/especiales/2019/elecciones-generales/encuestas-electorales/>):

- a. **Weights by date:** we have assigned more weight to the most recent polls. We did that by applying the following exponential formula:

$$\text{Date-weight} = 1.01228161^t$$

where t is the number of days of the considered period (that is, t goes from 0 to 90; in the first wave, $t=0$ is 27 July 2018 and $t=90$ is 25 October 2018).

According to the formula, the voting intention in a poll conducted at $t=0$ is multiplied by 1, while the voting intention in a poll conducted at $t=90$ is multiplied by 3.

- b. Weights by repeated polls:** we have weighted less the repeated polls from the same polling firm. Concretely, the most recent poll of each firm is multiplied by 1, while the rest of polls from the same firm are multiplied by 0.6.
- c. Weights by sample size:** The idea is that the polls with a higher sample size receive more weight, although following a decreasing trend. We have determined two thresholds, based on the following formula¹:

$$n = (z^2 \times P \times Q)/(e^2)$$

where n is the sample size, z is the number of deviation units that implies the adopted confidence level, P is the proportion of individuals who have a given characteristic, Q is the proportion of individuals who do not have this characteristic, and e is the sampling error.

Assuming a confidence level of 95% ($z=1.96$) and a situation of maximum indeterminacy ($P=Q=50\%$), we have calculated n if $e=3\%$ and $e=2\%$:

$$n = (1.96^2 \times 50 \times 50)/(3^2) = 1067.11$$

$$n = (1.96^2 \times 50 \times 50)/(2^2) = 2401$$

Given that, all the polls that have 1067 respondents or less are multiplied by 0.6; the polls that have between 1068 and 2400 respondents are multiplied by 1; and those that have 2401 respondents or more are multiplied by 1.2. The polls that have an unknown sample size are multiplied by 0.6.

Finally, the total weights are calculated: **Total weights = weights by date x weights by repeated polls x weights by sample size.**

Concerning the third wave, and given that it was performed few days before the general elections, we have simply used the results of these elections as the weights of each party voters' group. That is, we have considered that the electoral results are the most reliable picture of the real equilibrium of forces between parties at the time the third wave was conducted.

¹ See, for example, López-Roldán, P. & Fachelli, S. (2015) *Metodología de la investigación social cuantitativa*, UAB, Barcelona, p. 22. Available online at: https://ddd.uab.cat/pub/caplli/2017/185163/metinvsocua_cap2-4a2017.pdf.

4. THE IMPACT OF THE ELECTORAL SUCCESS AND FAILURE OF PARTIES IN WESTERN EUROPE ON THE AFFECTIVE POLARISATION OF THE LEADER AND THE PARTY

Abstract. Very little is known about the polarisation of feelings about leaders, especially outside the United States, despite the relevant roles discharged by party leaders in contemporary democracies as well as parliamentary and multiparty systems. This study explores Leader Affective Polarisation (LAP) vis-à-vis Party Affective Polarisation (PAP) in Western Europe. To fulfil this objective, it theoretically develops and empirically tests a set of expectations of the (differential) impact that the parties' electoral performance has on LAP and PAP, respectively. In particular, it is expected that the electoral wins and losses of in- and out-parties would influence individual affective assessments of party leaders more than the appraisal of the parties, which tends to remain more consistent and unchanging. Thus, the strength of LAP should also vary compared to PAP as a function of the same. This paper offers empirical evidence favouring this theoretical framework using post-electoral surveys from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), a collaborative research programme that includes like-dislike scales for both parties and their leaders for some national elections.

Keywords: Leader affective polarisation, party affective polarisation, electoral performance, Western Europe

4.1. Introduction

The term ‘affective polarisation’ broadly indicates the extent to which individuals experience sympathy towards their party and antipathy towards other parties (e.g. Iyengar et al. 2012; Iyengar and Westwood 2015; Reiljan 2020). However, the polarisation of affective evaluations may also be directed at other political objects, such as party leaders. Several studies on the United States (U.S.), a nation characterised by a two-party presidential system, have observed strongly polarised feelings for party leaders (e.g. Webster and Abramowitz 2017). In such contexts, feelings towards the opposing party were not significantly different than feelings towards politicians of the opposing party (Druckman and Levendusky 2019; Kingzette 2021). Also, sophisticated voters evinced a stronger polarisation of emotions vis-à-vis presidential candidates than for parties as a whole (Bolsen and Thornton 2021). However, affective polarisation concerning party leaders is a scantily explored terrain outside the U.S. despite empirical evidence of an increasing personalisation of politics in parliamentary and multiparty systems (e.g. Michel et al. 2020). Reiljan et al.’s (2021) recent and comprehensive comparative analysis is a prominent exception, demonstrating that the polarisation of feelings for leaders is lower than for parties in parliamentary and/or fragmented party systems.

In the U.S., presidential candidates are the symbol of their party and play a pivotal role in the political system (Bolsen and Thornton 2021). In Western Europe, a region in which political systems are generally typified by the parliamentary type and/or present greater fragmentation levels than the U.S. exemplar, political parties represent the primary political reference for voters. However, different studies show that, whereas party identification has declined in most Western European countries, party leaders have gained centrality and influence in voters’ voting decisions (e.g. Garzia et al. 2020). Some scholars argue, and provide some empirical evidence, that party leaders may become ‘cleavages’, in the sense that they promote narratives combining personal attributes with salient issues that generate ‘opposing camps characterised by conflicting attitudes towards the leader’ (Bordignon 2020, p. 4). That is, relevant levels of affective polarisation can stem from affective ties with the leader even in the parliamentary and/or fragmented party systems of Europe. Nevertheless, very little is still known about the polarisation of feelings towards leaders in the European context and its comparison with the polarisation of sentiments for parties.

This paper explores leader affective polarisation (LAP) vis-à-vis party affective polarisation (PAP) in Western Europe from a social-psychological evaluation perspective, taking advantage of the so-called *person sensitivity bias* (Moon and Conlon 2002) and the *team halo effect* (Naquin and Tynan 2003). The principal argument is that political parties (impersonal objects) are thought of in more universal and unchanging terms than party leaders (individuals); thus, appraisals of the latter are more likely to be influenced by the specific context of success or failure than evaluations of the former. Specifically, party leaders are blamed and perceived less favourably than their parties when their electoral performances diminish, but are credited when their parties obtain increased support in national elections. Consequently, the strength of LAP vis-à-vis PAP is lower in individuals whose preferred party loses votes in an election (compared to the previous instance) than those whose preferred party gains votes. Following the same reasoning, LAP is expected to be less potent than PAP for electorally successful out-parties than for the out-parties that lost support in national elections.

Previous studies conducted in the U.S. context indicate an equivalence between the polarisation of feelings for parties and leaders (Druckman and Levendusky 2019; Kingzette 2021). The present paper dialogues with these investigations to demonstrate congruence with Reiljan et al. (2021) that LAP tends to be lower than PAP in Western European party systems. It also significantly evidences that the affective evaluations of party leaders are less consistent and more vulnerable to the impact of the parties' electoral wins and losses than the actual affective evaluations of the political parties. These findings constitute a relevant contribution to the comparative literature on affective polarisation and have relevant implications for Western European political systems and societies: to the extent that party leaders play an increasing pivotal role, affective polarisation tendencies may become more volatile and depend more on the specific electoral results of parties and their leaders.

I have used the data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) to empirically bolster this argument, selecting post-electoral surveys conducted in Western European countries that include like-dislike scales for both leaders and parties.

4.2. Theoretical Framework

Affective polarisation has been extensively studied in the U.S. during the last decade. It is defined as ‘the tendency of people identifying as Republicans or Democrats to view opposing partisans negatively and copartisans positively’ (Iyengar and Westwood 2015, p. 691). More recently, an increasing number of studies have explored this phenomenon outside the U.S. from a comparative perspective (e.g. Gidron et al. 2020; Reiljan 2020; Wagner 2021). Scholars have employed techniques to measure affective polarisation. However, the feeling thermometer question is the most widely used: it asks respondents to rate the different political parties on a scale ranging from dislike to like, or from cold to warm (Iyengar et al. 2019). On the other hand, affective evaluation can also be directed at other relevant political objects, such as party leaders or candidates. These facets have generally received much less research attention, especially outside the U.S.

The scant attention paid to political leaders by the literature probing affective polarisation contrasts with the amount of research offering empirical evidence of the relevance of party leaders. This significance is observed not only in presidential systems, where presidential candidates are evidently pivotal but also in parliamentary and multiparty democracies. Some scholars, for example, have identified an increasing presidentialisation of party structures and political executives (e.g. Elgie and Passarelli 2020; Passarelli 2015; Poguntke and Webb 2005). Candidates have been found to attain centrality in electoral campaigns (e.g. Esser and Strömbäck 2014) and to become targets of electoral attacks (Pruysers and Cross 2016). Different studies point to the distinctive and increasing impact of party leader evaluations on vote choice in parliamentary democracies (e.g. Garzia et al. 2020; Holmberg and Oscarsson 2011; Lobo 2014; Michel et al. 2020).

The relevance of leaders in contemporary democracies indicates the need for scholars to focus on the populace’s polarisation of feelings experienced with respect to party leaders. Researchers must also investigate the extent to which such oppositions diverge from the polarisation of sentiments sensed for political parties. Druckman and Levendusky (2019) and Kingzette (2021) utilised experimental designs to explore possible differences between emotions in the U.S. concerning the opposing party, its leader and its voters. Their results reveal that voter ratings systematically drop even though the evaluations of parties and leaders cannot be differentiated. Thus, the authors conclude that people think

more of elites than voters when they assess the other party. In congruence with this deduction, some studies that probed affective polarisation in the U.S. through models employing feeling thermometer ratings both for parties and their leaders did not discover relevant differences between parties and leaders with respect to their origins or consequences (e.g. Enders and Armaly 2019; Webster and Abramowitz 2017). Moreover, recent research evinces that animosity towards the out-party presidential candidate is even stronger than towards the out-party among the most sophisticated partisans (Bolsen and Thornton 2021). Finally, the results reported by Klar et al. (2018) suggest less dislike towards supporters of local party candidates than towards followers of parties at the most salient national level.

However, analyses on LAP are scarcer outside the U.S. To date, Reiljan et al.'s (2021) study remains unique in its investigation of the relative strengths of LAP vis-à-vis PAP at the aggregate level in comparative perspective. The average quantum of LAP consistently appears lower than PAP, even though the ratios of the extents vary according to diverse contextual factors. Most outstandingly, Reiljan et al.'s (2021) study finds that the polarisation of feelings towards leaders is lower in parliamentary democracies than in presidential systems and that the relative strength of LAP decreases in tandem with greater fragmentation of the party system. Moreover, a few other studies have queried the polarisation of leader evaluations outside the U.S., especially in Western Europe. Barisione (2017) analysed how the simple act of voting for a party fuels the gap between the assessments of in-party and out-party leaders in the instances of Germany and Italy. Bordignon (2020) contended and empirically tested in the case of Italy that political leaders can themselves become lines of division ('cleavages') and hence polarise the electorate into opposing camps. Further, Garzia and da Silva (2021) contemplated the concept of *negative personalisation*, demonstrating that negative affective evaluations of leaders have increasingly influenced vote choice in Western Europe, even when controlling for positive leader evaluations.

Recent studies show that electoral campaigns polarise positive and negative feelings vis-à-vis parties (Hansen and Kosiara-Pedersen 2017; Hernández et al. 2021) and their leaders (Barisione 2017) by activating partisan identities and strengthening ideological polarisation. After elections, citizens become less strongly identified with their preferred party, perceive fewer ideological differences between parties and thus progressively depolarise. However, these studies do not consider the possibility that an individual's

level of affective polarisation could differ depending on the electoral success or failure of the person's preferred party in national elections or on the electoral wins and losses of out-parties. Moreover, and crucially, the strength of the effects of the electoral performance of parties could differ depending on the evaluated political objects: i.e. whether they are parties or leaders. Reiljan et al. (2021) argue briefly that the lower mean levels of LAP vis-à-vis PAP could be partially attributed to the possibility that in-party evaluations are more resilient to electoral failures. In contrast, leaders are accorded most of the blame. In the section that follows, I conceptualise that the success or failure of political parties in national elections constitutes a relevant predictor of the strength of LAP vis-à-vis PAP.

Distinct levels of personhood denote a critical difference between parties and leaders. Sears (1983) mooted a *person-positivity bias*, according to which attitude objects resembling individual human beings produce greater perceived similarity. In turn, this similitude generates more liking than less personal attitude objects such as inanimate items or even grouped versions of the same persons (see the pioneering study of LaPiere 1934 or the recent application of this bias to the study of immigration-related attitudes by Iyengar et al. 2013). By this reasoning, leaders should attract more positive feelings than parties. However, it has been demonstrated that the generalizability of the person-positivity bias is quite limited. Nilsson and Ekehammar (1987) argued that person-positivity bias is expected to appear only when the similarity is based on the personhood dimension and not when it is grounded in some other dimensions, as in the case of the evaluation of political objects. In such contexts, ideological likeness seems more relevant than a resemblance to personhood. Political parties rather than their leaders represent the primary political reference for voters, especially in parliamentary and multiparty systems; thus, ideological similarity should cause more extreme positive and negative assessments of parties than of leaders. Therefore, the liking of the out-leader should be higher than the fondness for the out-party (person-positivity bias). Similarly, the liking for the in-party should be more potent than affection for the in-leader (person-negativity bias). This argument aligns with the results of Reiljan et al.'s (2021) comparative analysis, especially in parliamentary and/or fragmented party systems.

Further, the electoral success and failure of political parties may influence the extent to which the person-negativity bias operates for in-groups and the degree to which person-positivity bias works for out-groups. According to the so-labelled *person sensitivity bias*,

defined and empirically tested by Moon and Conlon (2002), individuals are viewed more favourably than impersonal objects only in contexts of encouraging performance; similarly, people receive lesser approval than objects when circumstances are disadvantageous. Again, Naquin and Tynan (2003) also postulated the *team halo effect* to describe the tendency to primarily identify individual members as causal agents of poor team results, while teams are not blamed for their failures as collectives. This discrepancy occurs because the judgement of individuals is rooted in the ‘particularistic relationship’ and the careful psychological distance that exists between people, while impersonal objects are thought of in more ‘universal or unchanging terms’ (Foa and Foa 1974; Moon and Conlon 2002). In this sense, the prior success of impersonal objects acts as a cognitive anchor that protects them against current failures. In contrast, the previous success of individuals, who are viewed as more unpredictable and inconsistent than objects, is more ephemeral and can easily be negated by the current bad results. Moreover, the performance of individuals is perceived as more volitional than the accomplishments of objects or collectives; thus, the actions of people tend to be more viewed as determined by internal causes (such as effort or ability) than the activities of objects or collectives (Weiner 1985). Hence, individuals are adjudicated as more volatile and likely to be influenced by the current context of success or failure than objects, evaluations of which tend to be more stable and consistent over time.

I argue based on such reasoning that, on the one hand, the electoral wins and losses of the preferred party may affect the levels of both in-leader and in-party liking, albeit to a different degree. The loss of support by one’s party in national elections may lead a person to sense a more pronounced reduction of positive sentiments towards the leader of the in-party than towards the in-party, given that party supporters may be primarily inclined to blame the leader for the failure. The person-negativity bias for preferred political objects described above should thus increase with the failure of the in-party. Conversely, their own party’s increase in votes could fuel in-leader liking to a greater extent than in-party liking, and person-negativity bias is then substantially reduced. As a result, I expect that LAP is much lower than PAP among individuals whose in-party suffered an electoral defeat, while the strength of affective polarisation towards leaders is quite similar to the party-related polarisation in followers whose in-party obtained electoral gains. The first set of hypotheses, therefore, asserts:

H1a. Affective polarisation is higher among individuals whose in-party evinces increased support in national elections.

H1b. The abovementioned association is stronger for LAP than for PAP.

A similar logic can be applied to out-parties. Principally, a significantly higher person-positivity bias is expected apropos non-preferred political objects for successful out-parties. In other words, the popularity of the leader of an out-party that has gained electoral success in national elections may increase, and citizens may attribute to this person some positive qualities such as political ability, intelligence or persuasion that can explain the beneficial results. Even partisans of other parties may augment, to some extent, their affinity in the personhood dimension towards the leader of the successful out-party, reducing their levels of hostility towards the frontrunner. However, feelings towards the out-party are not expected to vary or could change to a minor degree, given the more consistent nature of less personalised objects: the evaluation of out-parties is predominantly determined by ideological similarities. In contrast, the person-positivity bias is predicted to be lower when out-parties lose support in national elections: the levels of dislike towards the leader of an out-party that suffers an electoral failure is expected to increase to a greater extent than the dislike towards the out-party. Therefore, the second group of hypotheses states:

H2a. Affective polarisation is lower when the evaluated out-party increases its support in national elections.

H2b. The abovementioned association is stronger for LAP than for PAP.

4.2.1. The effects of poor electoral performance and the moderating role of ideological polarisation

The relationship between the electoral performance registered by political parties and the strength of LAP vis-à-vis PAP may not be linear. The results of Moon and Conlon's (2002) second study to test the *person sensitivity bias* suggest that when performance is terrible, people tend to differentiate between types of objects to a lesser extent. Thus, apart from individuals, inanimate objects or groups are also blamed for their poor

performance. If this finding is transposed to the realm of political appraisal, it is expected that only moderate electoral losses by the in-party cause positive feelings for the party leader to decrease substantially vis-à-vis the party so that the strength of LAP compared to PAP diminishes. However, when the losses of the in-party are very high, the party is also blamed, so the strength of LAP vis-à-vis PAP is presumed to be greater than in the case of in-parties that suffer only moderate losses. A similar outcome could be expected for out-parties: the leader of an out-party that suffers moderate losses in national elections could experience a more significant increase of dislike sentiments than the out-party; however, if the losses are major, the out-party, and not only its leader, could experience an increase of negative evaluation. Consequently, the strength of LAP vis-à-vis PAP is expected to be lower for out-parties that suffer a big electoral failure than for out-parties that experience only moderate losses. Therefore, the third hypothesis is asserted:

H3. The strength of LAP begins to increase (decrease) compared to PAP after a certain level of electoral losses incurred by in-parties (out-parties).

Finally, the present study explores the possible moderating role of ideological polarisation. The extant literature has empirically demonstrated that ideological distance, both between political elites and between voters and parties or candidates, fuels affective polarisation (e.g. Hartevelt 2021; Rogowski and Sutherland 2015; Webster and Abramowitz 2017). That is, prejudice and animosity are partially founded on the assumption of dissimilar beliefs between oneself and the members of the out-groups (Bougher 2017). Moreover, as Nilsson and Ekehammar (1987) contend, there is no reason to expect the person-positivity bias when the assumption of personhood similarity is implausible, such as when voters evaluate a party leader who is completely ideologically opposed to them. In such a case, the relationship established in the second set of hypotheses should be conditioned by ideological distance. As argued above, the electoral success of an out-party is predicted to boost the popularity of its leader, increase the perceived personhood similarity and reduce the levels of animosity towards the frontrunner. However, the level of animosity towards the leader of this party is expected to be especially high, and the leader's electoral success may not lessen the negative assessment of the individual when the ideological distance between an individual and an out-party is considerable. For example, the electoral success of a radical left party may

not reduce animosity levels towards its leader among right-wing individuals because the good electoral performance of the leader does not produce a relevant increase in personhood similarity, given the enormous ideological discrepancies between both subjects. Conversely, the good results of a radical left party may increase the personhood similarity between its leader and some centre-left electors because the ideological discrepancies are less intense, causing a decreased negative evaluation of the radical left leader. Hence, the fourth and last hypothesis is stated as follows:

H4. The effect of the electoral performance of out-parties on the strength of affective polarisation for the leader vis-à-vis the party is weaker when the ideological distance between individuals and out-parties is more significant.

4.3. Data and Methods

I employed cross-country data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), a collaborative research programme that comprises five standard modules of nationally representative post-election surveys administered on least one of the modules in 56 countries. This dataset is appropriate for the present investigation because it includes like-dislike scales ranging from 0 to 10 with respect to the relevant parties and their leaders in each countrywide election. The only exceptions are the module 2 surveys, which do not incorporate scales concerning leaders. These like-dislike scales are apposite and represent standard measures of partisan affective evaluations (Iyengar et al. 2019). I selected all Western European country-elections that include like-dislike scales for both parties and leaders, aggregating a total of 57 country-elections nested in 18 countries¹. I limited the sample to Western European countries for comparability reasons. I considered, for each selected countrywide election, all the parties and their respective leaders with a like-dislike scale obtaining more than 1% of votes in the current or previous national election. In sum, 367 party-elections were included in the sample. Table A1 in the Appendix displays the selected parties in each considered country-election. All respondents who evaluated their party and its leader and at least one ‘out-party/out-leader’ pair were selected for the empirical analysis.

¹ In fact, 17 countries were selected for the present paper but Flanders and Wallonia in Belgium are treated separately in the survey.

The hypotheses stated above required the distinction between the in-parties and out-parties of the respondents to be established; thus, I had to identify the preferred party of each respondent. Therefore, the respondents were classified as partisans, first based on their reported party identification in the CSES surveys and then based on reported vote choices in the current national election for respondents who were not identified with any of the selected parties. The remaining respondents who could not be attributed to one of the selected parties were not included in the analysis².

To test H1a and H1b, I conducted linear random intercept models with respondents nested in in-party-elections. The outcome variables were set as PAP and LAP. These variables were measured as the mean like-dislike distance from the in-party and its leader to the rest of the parties and leaders, respectively. This mean distance was weighted by the normalised proportion of votes received by each out-party in the current national election. Weighting out-parties and out-leaders by their party size was deemed necessary because a respondent's dislike of a major competitor matters more than the aversion to a minor rival (see Wagner 2021, pp.3-4). LAP and PAP ranged from -10 to 10. The positive values indicated that respondents evaluated the own party or leader higher than the rest; negative values corresponded to the few respondents who assessed their party or leader as worse than the other parties or leaders. Finally, I also used the difference between LAP and PAP (LAP-PAP) as an outcome variable which allowed me to statistically test the strength of LAP vis-à-vis PAP.

The key independent variable in the models, measured at the in-party-election level, was a dummy element that distinguished parties that increased their vote percentage in the current national election over the previous national election (1) from those that lost electoral support (0) (for more detailed information on this variable, see the Appendix). Different basic control variables were selected at the in-party-election level. The first one was party size, which was measured as the percentage of votes received by each in-party in the current national election. Second, the left-right position of the parties, which was calculated as the mean ideological position attributed to each party on an 11-point scale by respondents in each national-election. Third, the ideological extremism of the parties,

² The definition of in-parties based on party identification and vote choice lets me compare the affective evaluations of parties and their leaders. Wagner (2021) alternatively defines in-parties as the most-liked party (that is, the party to which a respondent attributes the highest liking score). However, Wagner's definition was not apt for the present analysis because it would imply the designation of in-parties based on one of the two like-dislike scales I aimed to compare.

the absolute difference between the party's ideological position and the central point in the left-right scale (5), was also included in the models. And, finally, a dummy variable that distinguished new parties (1) from the rest (0) was also selected as a control³. Moreover, I included some control variables at the respondent level in the models. The first two were well-known drivers of affective polarisation: party identification and the ideological extremism⁴ of the respondents. Ideological self-placement was also included in the models. In addition, I selected fundamental demographic variables such as sex, age and education levels⁵. Country-election fixed effects were included in the models. Thus, I could identify the impact of the different independent variables only from variations across respondents and in-parties within the same country and election.

H2a, H2b and H4 alluded to the possible effects of the electoral wins and losses of out-parties; the dataset was stacked by out-party-election to test these postulations, so each observation was a response by an out-party-election 'dyad'. The outcome variables, LAP and PAP, were measured respectively in this case as the difference between the liking score for the in-party and its leader and the liking score for each of the various out-parties and their leaders. I also used the difference between LAP and PAP (LAP-PAP) as an outcome variable. The key independent variable, measured at the out-party-election level, was a dummy that distinguished out-parties that increased their vote percentage in the current national election over the previous poll (1) from those that lost electoral support (0). The selected control variables at the out-party-election level remained the same as in previous models: party size, ideological position, ideological extremism and a dummy that distinguished new parties from the rest. Moreover, the absolute ideological distance between a respondent's ideological self-placement and the ideological position of each evaluated out-party was also included in the models. An interaction term between ideological distance and the 'won vs. lost' dummy was entered into the model to test H4.

³ This dummy variable identifying new parties was relevant because it controlled for the fact that all the included new parties appear as successful parties that increased their vote share in relation to the previous election; that is, a new party will be always classified as a successful one because it did not compete in the previous election and, hence, did not get any vote. An additional reason for including this variable as a control is that new parties tend to have a weaker organization and territorial implementation and, hence, may rely more on strong leaderships.

⁴ Party identification was measured on a 0–3 scale ranging from those who did not feel an affinity to any party to those who were extremely affiliated to a specific party. Ideological extremism denotes the absolute difference between a respondent's ideological self-placement and the mean ideological position of respondents in a given country-election.

⁵ The education groups were: 1) lower secondary or less; 2) higher secondary or post-secondary and 3) university.

Each respondent appeared once for each evaluated out-party and the hypotheses did not require the inclusion of variables at the respondent level; thus, I included respondent fixed effects. In this manner, I accounted for the between-respondent factors so that the effects of the different independent variables were examined within-respondents. Standard errors were clustered by country-election⁶.

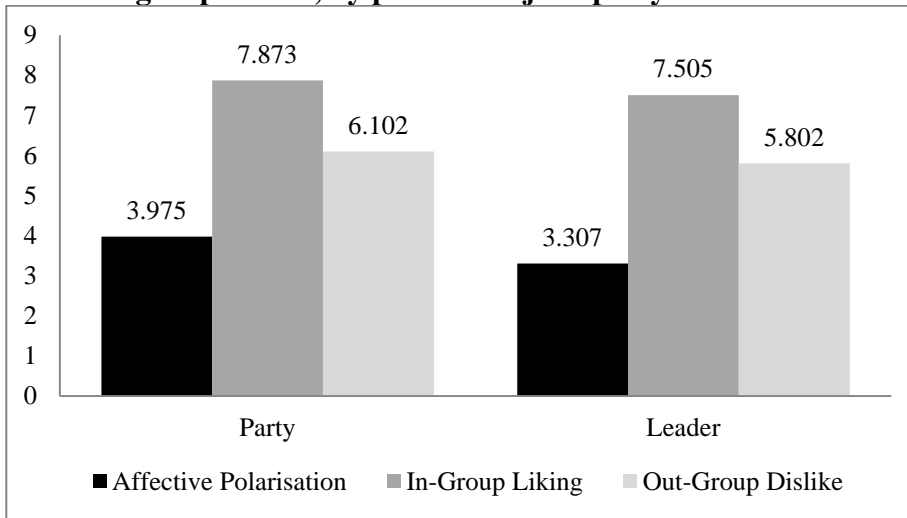
Finally, H3 referred to the possibility that both the leader and the party are blamed when the party exhibits a very weak electoral performance. It was necessary to explore the potential non-linear relationships between the electoral performance of the parties on the one hand and affective polarisation concerning the leader and party on the other hand to test this expectation. I accomplished this task by re-estimating the previous principal models and including a continuous variable that measured the vote change of the parties between the current and last national elections instead of the dummy variable distinguishing parties that won votes from those that lost support. I also ensured that this variable was squared and cubed. Table A2 in the Appendix offers some basic descriptive statistics of the selected variables.

4.4. Results

It is pertinent to initially compare the mean levels of LAP and PAP in the sample. Figure 1 illustrates that, like the results obtained by Reiljan et al. (2021), the mean PAP (3.975) was around 0.67 scale points higher than the mean LAP (3.307). The differences between parties (institutional object) and leaders (individuals), although not very large, were consistent with the arguments mooted by Nilsson and Ekehammar (1987) if the affective polarisation indices are divided into in-group and out-group components. The mean in-party liking (7.873) was around 0.37 points higher than the mean in-leader liking (7.505), and the mean out-party dislike (6.102) was around 0.30 points higher than the mean out-leader dislike (5.802).

⁶ Compared to the other alternatives (standard errors clustered at the respondent or party level), clustering standard errors at the country-election level is the most conservative option.

Figure 1. Mean levels of affective polarisation, in-group liking and out-group dislike, by political object: party and leader



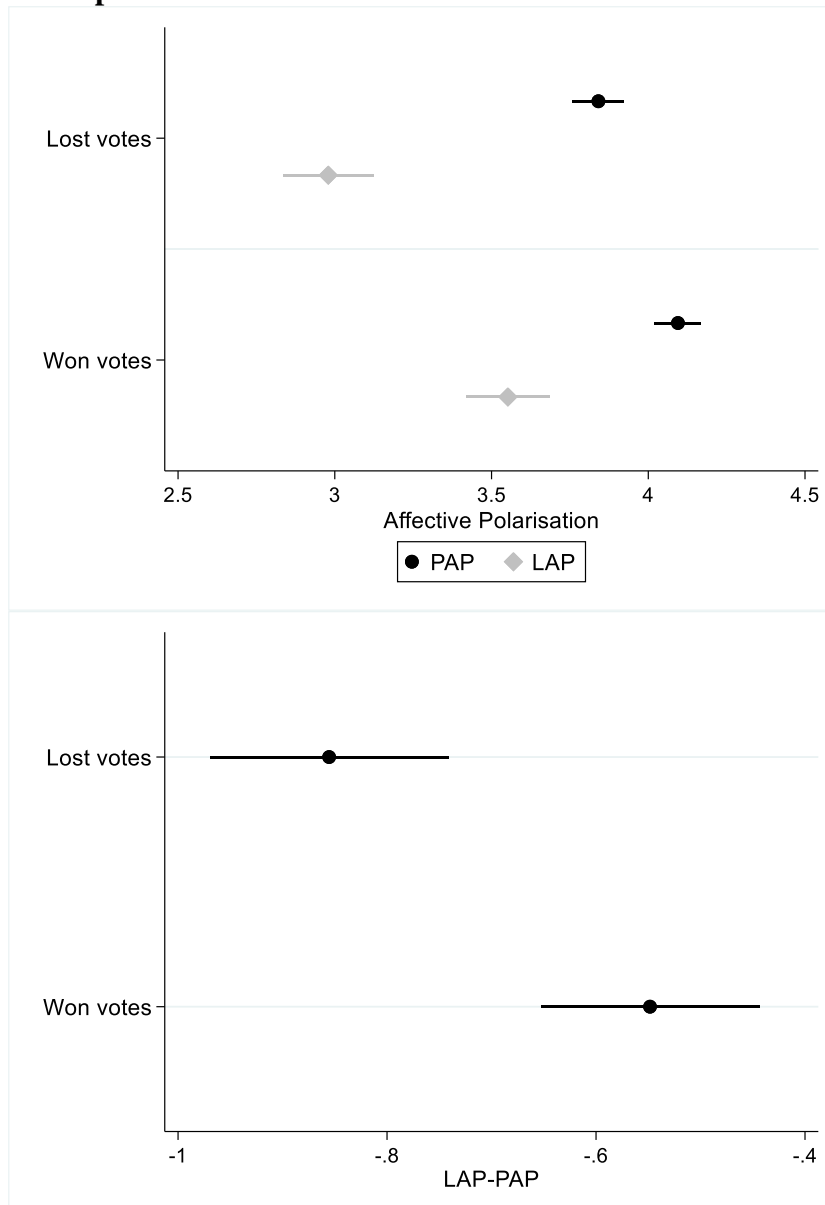
Source: CSES, Western European country-elections.

The first set of hypotheses implies that the relative strength of LAP vis-à-vis PAP is higher when an individual's party wins votes in national elections than when the party loses support. Figure 2 displays precisely this outcome (see Table A3 in the Appendix for the regression models). The top graph shows the predicted levels of LAP and PAP among respondents whose parties increased vote percentage in the current national election (compared to the results obtained in the previous election) and among those whose parties lost support. As expected, the former exhibit higher levels of polarisation, a difference that is greater for LAP. The bottom graph displays the predicted difference in affective polarisation between leader and party (LAP–PAP). The relative strength of LAP vis-à-vis PAP is significantly higher when in-parties win votes in national elections than when in-parties lose support: respondents whose party attain more votes are predicted to be 0.55 points more affectively polarised towards parties than towards leaders; this difference is 0.86 points among respondents whose in-parties fail.

According to the theoretical framework, the previous results are essentially driven by the in-group liking component of affective polarisation. Figure 3 displays the predicted differences between in-leader liking and in-party liking (in-leader liking–in-party liking) as well as between out-leader dislike and out-party dislike (out-leader dislike–out-party dislike). In line with the expectations, in-party liking is 0.26 points higher than in-leader liking among respondents whose in-party won votes; however, the expected liking score for the in-party is 0.53 points higher than for the in-leader when the in-party loses

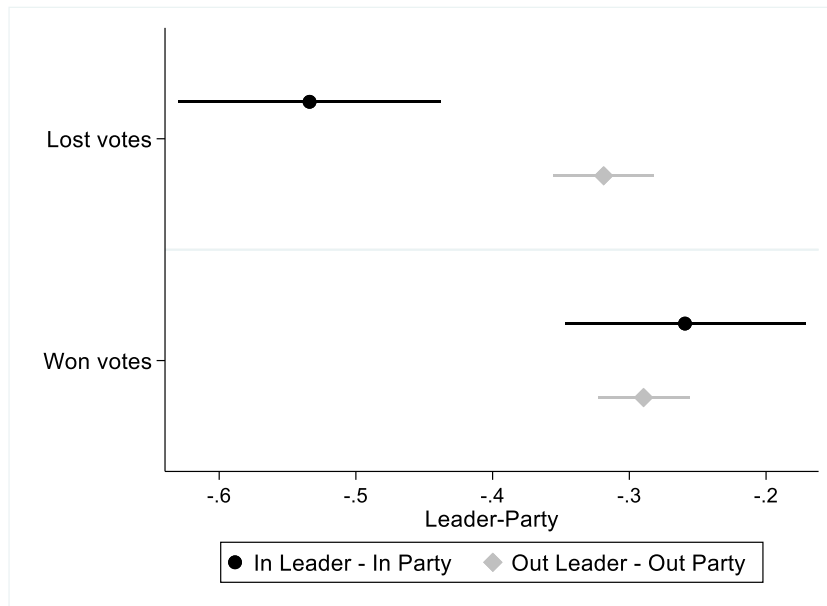
support. Conversely, no significant differences are noted for out-group dislike (see Figure A1 in the Appendix for the predicted levels of in-group liking and out-group dislike for in-parties that won and lost votes; see also Tables A4 and A5 for the regression models). Overall, the results support H1a and H1b.

Figure 2. Predicted levels of party affective polarisation (PAP), leader affective polarisation (LAP) and LAP-PAP for in-parties that win and lose votes in national elections



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2 and 3 in Table A3. Source: CSES, Western European country-elections.

Figure 3. Predicted levels of in-leader liking–in-party liking and out-leader dislike–out-party dislike for in-parties that win and lose votes in national elections

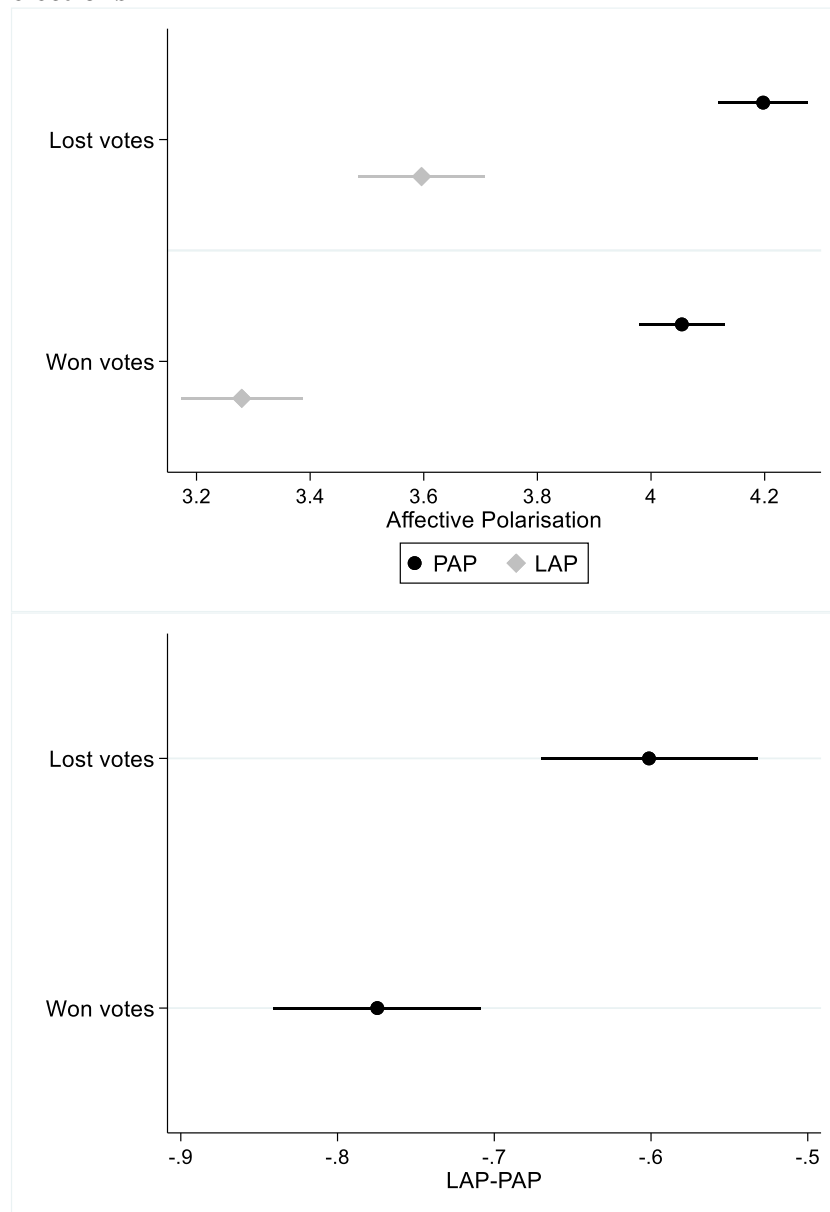


Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Model 3 in Table A4 and Model 3 in Table A5.

Source: CSES, Western European country-elections.

The second set of hypotheses involves out-parties. Figure 4 displays the principal results of the models that include respondent fixed effects (see Table A6 in the Appendix for the regression models). The top graph elucidates that affective polarisation is higher when the evaluated out-party loses vote percentage in national elections than when it wins support and illuminates that this difference is greater for LAP than PAP. The bottom graph confirms that the LAP is significantly weaker than PAP when the evaluated out-party gains in national elections than when it fails. Specifically, respondents display a predicted LAP lower by 0.77 points than PAP when the evaluated out-party wins the vote; this difference is 0.60 points when the evaluated out-party loses support. Thus, the findings are aligned with H2a and H2b.

Figure 4. Within-individual predicted levels of party affective polarisation (PAP), leader affective polarisation (LAP) and LAP–PAP for out-parties that win and lose votes in national elections



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2 and 3 in Table A6.
Source: CSES, Western European country-elections.

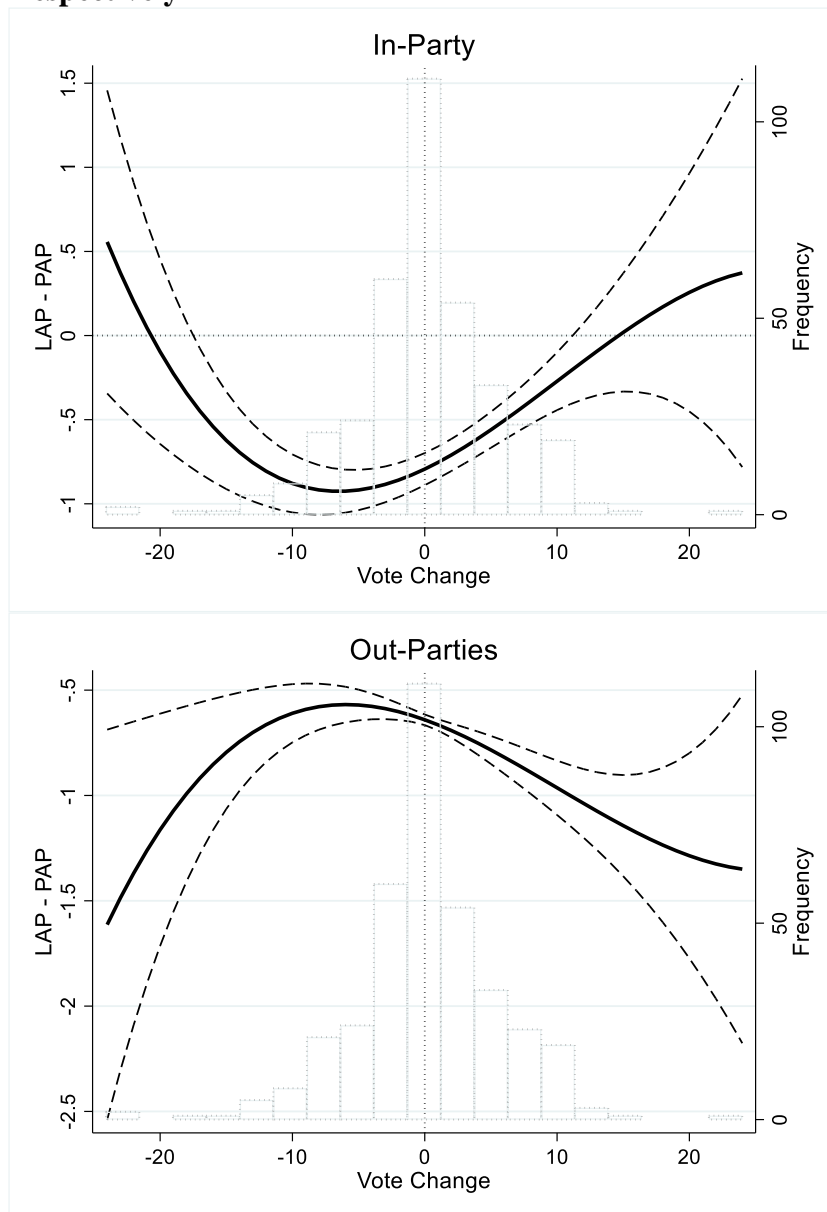
I tested H3 by re-estimating the major existing models but including a continuous variable that measured the vote change registered by (in-/out-) parties (between the current and last national election) instead of the ‘won vs. lost’ dummy vote change. I ensured the vote change variable was squared and cubed. I started by exploring the possible non-linear relationship between the vote change of in-parties and the difference between LAP and PAP. The coefficients of both vote change squared and vote change

cubed were significant and a cubic relationship was thus determined (see Model 1 in Table A7 in the Appendix).

The top graph in Figure 5 displays the predicted difference between LAP and PAP across levels of vote change of in-parties. The in-parties losing support represent the primary foci of interest. In congruence with H3, moderate in-party losses seem to slightly decrease the relative strength of LAP vis-à-vis PAP: LAP was expected to be 0.79 points lower than PAP when the in-party did not experience any support change; LAP was predicted to be 0.92 points lower than PAP when the in-party decreased its vote share in 7 percentage points. However, LAP begins to grow in strength over PAP from a 7-point percentage loss of the vote. This turn is primarily attributable to the simultaneous deterioration of affective evaluations of in-parties and leaders when the results are inferior (see Models 2 and 3 in Table A7 and Figure A2 in the Appendix). The difference between LAP and PAP appears to be non-significantly different from 0 in the most highly adverse instances; nonetheless, this result demands caution given the minimal number of in-parties that suffer such a decline. Finally, focusing on in-parties that increased their support, the greater the electoral success, the higher the strength of LAP vis-à-vis PAP (although the growth decreases slightly).

The bottom graph in Figure 5 shows the forecasted difference between LAP and PAP in respondents with respect to spectrum-wide vote change levels of out-parties. In the model, the coefficient of vote change squared is significant but not the cubed term; thus, a quadratic relationship exists (see Table A8 in the Appendix). Again, the out-parties that lose votes constitute the main interest of the analysis. LAP appears to increase slightly in strength in comparison to PAP in the case of small out-party electoral losses. However, LAP begins to lose strength against PAP after the loss of votes is calculated at more than 6 percentage points. For example, LAP is projected to be 0.57 points lower than PAP for out-parties that lose vote share amounting to 6 points; however, LAP is anticipated to be 0.70 points lower than PAP for out-parties that lose a total of 13 points. It is observed that the greater the electoral success of out-parties that win national elections, the lower the strength of LAP vis-à-vis PAP.

Figure 5. Predicted difference between leader affective polarisation and party affective polarisation (LAP–PAP) across vote change levels of in-party and out-parties, respectively



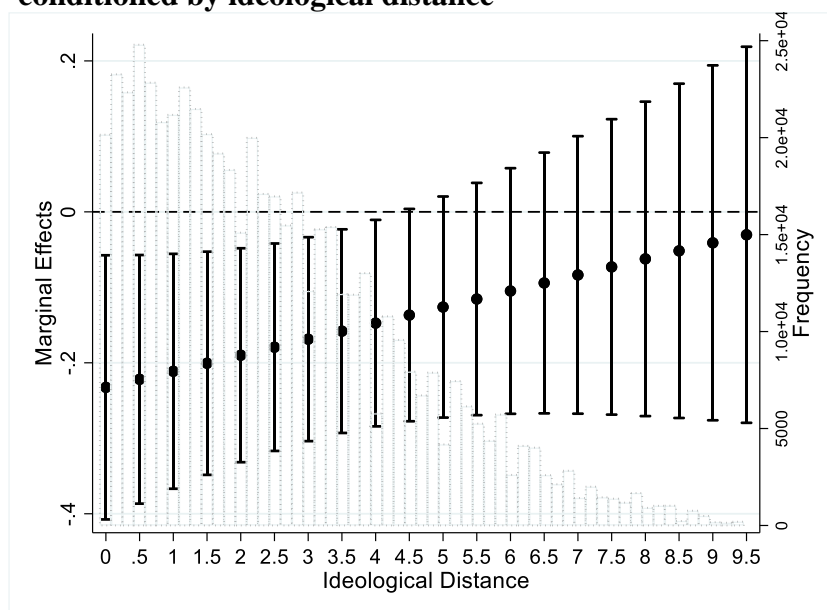
Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Model 1 in Table A7 and Model 1 in Table A8.

Source: CSES, Western European country-elections.

Finally, I probed the extent to which the results reported in Figure 4 were moderated by the ideological distance between individuals and out-parties. I tested H4 via an interaction term between ideological distance and the ‘won vs. lost’ dummy included in the model that incorporated the difference between LAP and PAP as an outcome variable (see Table A9 in the Appendix). The interaction term evinced the expected direction (positive) but

did not achieve a standard level of significance. However, Figure 6 illuminates that the marginal effects of the electoral performance of out-parties on the distinctions between LAP and PAP are aligned with the expectations across levels of ideological distance. Thus, LAP is significantly weaker than PAP for out-parties that win votes in national elections in comparison to out-parties that lose support. However, this outcome is noted only when the ideological distance is lower by 4 or more scale points. If the ideological distance is between 4 and 5 points, the expected difference is barely significant at a confidence level of 99%. Finally, when the ideological distance is greater than 5 points, LAP vis-à-vis PAP is no longer significantly different for successful out-parties than for out-parties that fail in national elections.

Figure 6. Marginal effects of electoral wins and losses of out-parties on the difference between leader affective polarisation and party affective polarisation (LAP–PAP), conditioned by ideological distance



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Model 1 in Table A9.
Source: CSES, Western European country-elections.

4.5. Conclusions

Despite the relevant role party leaders discharge in contemporary democracies as well as parliamentary and multiparty systems, very little is known about the polarisation of public feelings towards leaders, especially outside the U.S., the ways in which such

oppositions differ from party affective polarisation and the factors that could explain some of the discrepancies between LAP and PAP. The present study transfers the *person sensitivity bias* (Moon and Conlon 2002) and the *team halo effect* (Naquin and Tynan 2003) to the domain of political evaluations to partially bridge this gap in the literature in the context of Western Europe. To achieve its stated objective, this study contemplated the possibility that affective evaluations of party leaders are influenced to a greater degree by the electoral fortunes of the parties in the current elections than the evaluation of the parties. Thus, LAP varies in strength vis-à-vis PAP as a function of the electoral wins and losses of the political parties.

The results obtained from a set of models using data from the CSES are aligned with the expectations. First, in-party liking appears to be higher than in-leader liking, whereas out-party dislike is higher than out-leader dislike. Second, respondents assess the leader of their party more positively when the in-party gains vote in national elections than when it loses support; the same occurs with the evaluation of in-parties, although the difference between those that win and lose support is much smaller. In other words, affective evaluations of in-parties appear to be more consistent and less influenced by electoral results than appraisals of in-party leaders. As a result, LAP is weaker compared to PAP in respondents whose in-parties fail in elections than those whose in-parties increased their vote percentage. Third, the same logic operates with respect to out-parties: the within-respondent results show that LAP is weaker compared to PAP when the evaluated out-party increases its votes percentage than when the out-party loses electoral support.

These general results, however, are nuanced in two ways. First, the analysis suggests that when parties perform abysmally in national elections (i.e. when they lose a lot of support), the leaders of these parties and the parties are both blamed. Consequently, the LAP starts gaining strength vis-à-vis PAP after a certain level of electoral loss by in-parties; similarly, LAP begins to lose strength vis-à-vis PAP after a certain level of loss of base support by out-parties. Second, the electoral success of the out-party does not decrease the levels of public dislike towards its leader to a greater degree than towards the out-party when the ideological distance between an individual and an out-party is very large.

The findings displayed in this paper offer substantial relevant implications considering the growing centrality of leaders in European politics. Some scholars highlight the

tendency towards post-ideological and personalised politics in which political leaders constitute new ‘cleavages’ that polarise the electorate (Bordignon 2020). Affective evaluations of leaders will comprise the central driving force of general political polarisation dynamics in Western Europe if this inclination increases in the future. Consequently, polarisation tendencies would become more volatile (and more prone to influence from particular party election results). At the same time, the distinctions between parties and their leaders would become increasingly blurred for citizens if political regimes become more presidential in their actual practices without necessarily changing their regime-types (Poguntke and Webb 2005). In such an event, the gap between LAP and PAP would follow a decreasing trend over time.

The present paper also offers implications for the recent literature examining the effects of campaigns on affective polarisation. The findings presented in this paper suggest that the progressive depolarisation process following an electoral campaign (Hernández et al. 2021) could be conditioned by the results obtained by the in-party of voters (or by the evaluated out-party), especially if party leaders are the evaluated political objects.

Further study is mandated on the constituents of the differences between LAP and PAP. First, factors other than electoral wins and losses in national elections could be explored at the party level, as also the possible impact of some traits of leaders. The effects of some individual-level characteristics, such as political sophistication, could also be analysed (see, in the U.S. context, Bolsen and Thornton 2021). It would further be interesting for prospective researchers to explore the extent to which the results I have obtained for Western European countries could be extrapolated to other regional contexts that tend to be characterised by higher levels of electoral volatility, among other particularities: for instance, Central and Eastern Europe (e.g. Powell and Tucker 2014).

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Appendix

Comments on the calculation of parties' electoral wins and losses

The key independent variable in the main models is a dummy that distinguish (in-/out-) parties that increased their vote percentage in the current national election over the previous national election (1) from those that lost electoral support (0). Additionally, I also use a continuous variable that measures the vote change of the parties between the current and last national elections. I have created these variables based on the official electoral results of the different parliamentary elections included in the study. In the case of France, the electoral results refer to the first round of the presidential elections.

I use the percentage of vote to calculate parties' electoral wins and losses (rather than the percentage of seats in parliament) due to different reasons. First, vote percentage is the most direct measure of popular support received by a political party. Second, most of the countries included in the study have voting systems with fairly proportion representation, so that increases in vote percentage tend to generate increases in parliamentary representation. And, third, the use of votes allows me to include in the empirical analysis the first round of the French presidential elections, in which there are no parliamentary seats at stake.

The calculation of these variables for some few specific parties and elections deserves a special attention:

1. I compare the results of *La France insoumise* in 2017 with the results of the Left Front in 2012. Although *La France insoumise* was not a coalition of parties, most of the political parties and personalities that made up the Left Front announced their support for *La France insoumise* for the presidential elections held in 2017. The presidential candidate was also the same. Similarly, I compare the results of the Left Front in 2012 with those of the French Communist Party in 2007. The Left Front was a coalition of left-wing parties, mainly the new Left Party and the Communist Party.
2. In Germany, I compare the results of the coalition between the new The Left and the Party of Democratic Socialism in 2005 with the results of the latter party in 2002.
3. In Italy 2018, the results of Free and Equal are compared with those obtained by Left Ecology Freedom in the previous election held in 2013. The latter party was among one of the founders of the former.
4. In Portugal, the Social Democratic Party and the CDS-People's Party formed an electoral alliance (Portugal Ahead) for the national election held in 2015. I have measured the vote change of Portugal Ahead by comparing the results of the electoral alliance in 2015 with the sum of the votes won by the Social Democratic Party and the CDS-People's Party in the previous election held in 2011. In 2019, however, the two parties ran in the national election separately. To measure the vote change of these two parties between 2019 and 2015, I have distributed the percentage of votes won by Portugal Ahead in 2015 between the Social Democratic Party and the CDS-People's Party based on the number of seats assigned to each party in the parliament.

That is, given that the 83.2% of the seats won by Portugal Ahead were assigned to the Social Democratic Party, I have also attributed the 83.2% of the votes won by the alliance to this party.

Some of the political parties included in the study are new parties. They are classified as successful ones that increased their vote share in relation to the previous election. I include a control dichotomous variable that distinguishes new parties (1) from the rest (0) in the models.

Table A1. Selection of parties by country and election. Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES)

Countries	Parties (elections)
Austria	Social Democratic Party of Austria - SPÖ (2013; 2017) Austrian People's Party - ÖVP (2013; 2017) Freedom Party of Austria - FPÖ (2013; 2017) The Greens - Die Grünen (2013; 2017) The New Austria - NEOS (2013; 2017) Team Stronach - TS (2013) Alliance for the Future of Austria - BZÖ (2013) Peter Pilz List - PILZ (2017)
BE-Flanders	New Flemish Alliance - N-VA (2019) Flemish Interest - VB (2019) Christian Democratic and Flemish - CD&V (2019) Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats - Open Vld (2019) Socialist Party Different - sp.a (2019) Green - Groen (2019) Workers' Party of Belgium - PVDA (2019)
BE-Wallonia	Socialist Party - PS (2019) Reformist Movement - MR (2019) Greens - Ecolo (2019) Workers' Party of Belgium - PTB (2019) Humanist Democratic Centre - cdH (2019) DéFI (2019) People's Party - PP (2019)
Denmark	Social Democrats - A (1998; 2007) Venstre - V (1998; 2007) Socialist People's Party - SF (1998; 2007) Conservative People's Party - DKF (1998; 2007) Danish Social Liberal Party - B (1998; 2007) Red-Green Alliance - EL-Ø (1998; 2007) Christian Democrats - KD (1998; 2007) Danish People's Party - DF (1998; 2007) Liberal Alliance - LA (2007) Centre Democrats - CD (1998)
Finland	Social Democratic Party - SDP (2007; 2011; 2015; 2019) National Coalition Party - KOK (2007; 2011; 2015; 2019) Centre Party - KESK (2007; 2011; 2015; 2019) Finns Party - PS (2007; 2011; 2015; 2019) Left Alliance - VAS (2007; 2011; 2015; 2019) Green League - VIHR (2007; 2011; 2015; 2019) Swedish People's Party - SFP/RKP (2007; 2011; 2015; 2019) Christian Democrats - KD (2007; 2011; 2015; 2019)
France	Socialist Party - PS (2007; 2012; 2017) Union for a Popular Movement - UMP (2007; 2012) / The Republicans - LR (2017) Communist Party - PCF (2007) / Left Front - FDG (2012) / France Insoumise (2017)

National Front - FN (2007; 2012; 2017)
Union for French Democracy - UDF (2007) / MoDem (2012)
The Greens - EELV (2007; 2012)
La République En Marche! - LaREM (2017)
Revolutionary Communist League - LCR (2007)

Germany
Social Democratic Party of Germany - SPD (1998; 2005; 2009; 2013; 2017)
Christian Democratic Union /CSU - CDU/CSU (1998; 2005; 2009; 2013; 2017)
Free Democratic Party - FDP (1998; 2005; 2009; 2013; 2017)
The Greens - Grüne (1998; 2005; 2009; 2013; 2017)
Party of Democratic Socialism - PDS (1998) / Die Linke (2005; 2009; 2013; 2017)
Alternative for Germany - AfD (2017)
National Democratic Party - NPD (2005)

Great Britain
Labour Party (1997; 2015; 2017)
Conservative Party (1997; 2015; 2017)
Liberal Democrats (1997; 2015; 2017)
Scottish National Party - SNP (1997; 2015; 2017)
United Kingdom Independence Party - UKIP (2015; 2017)
Green Party of England and Wales - GPEW (2015; 2017)

Greece
Coalition of the Radical Left - SYRIZA (2009; 2012; 2015a; 2015b)
New Democracy - ND (2009; 2012; 2015a; 2015b)
Panhellenic Socialist Movement - PASOK (2009; 2012; 2015a; 2015b)
Communist Party of Greece - KKE (2009; 2012; 2015a; 2015b)
Popular Association-Golden Dawn - XA (2012; 2015a; 2015b)
Independent Greeks - ANEL (2012; 2015a; 2015b)
The River - Potami (2015a; 2015b)
Union of Centrists - EK (2015b)
Democratic Left - DIMAR (2012)
Popular Orthodox Rally - LAOS (2009)
Ecologist Greens - OP (2009)

Iceland
Social Democratic Alliance - S (1999; 2007; 2009; 2013; 2016; 2017)
Independence Party - D (1999; 2007; 2009; 2013; 2016; 2017)
Progressive Party - B (1999; 2007; 2009; 2013; 2016; 2017)
Left-Green Movement - V (1999; 2007; 2009; 2013; 2016; 2017)
Pirate Party - P (2013; 2016; 2017)
Liberal Party - F (1999; 2007; 2009)
Reform Party - C (2016; 2017)
Bright Future - A (2013; 2016)
People's Party - F (2017)
Centre Party - M (2017)
Citizens' Movement - O (2009)
Iceland Movement-Living Country - I (2007)

Ireland
Fine Gael - FG (2007; 2011; 2016)
Fianna Fáil - FF (2007; 2011; 2016)
Labour (2007; 2011; 2016)
Sinn Féin - SF (2007; 2011; 2016)
Green - GP (2007; 2011; 2016)

People Before Profit/Solidarity - AAA-PBP (2016)
 Social Democrats - SD (2016)
 Progressive Democrats - PDs (2007)
Italy Five Star Movement - M5S (2018)
 Democratic Party - PD (2018)
 League - Lega (2018)
 Forza Italia - FI (2018)
 Brothers of Italy - FdI (2018)
 Free and Equal - LeU (2018)
Netherlands Labour Party - PvdA (1998; 2006; 2010)
 People's Party for Freedom and Democracy - VVD (1998; 2006; 2010)
 Christian Democratic Appeal - CDA (1998; 2006; 2010)
 Democrats 66 - D66 (1998; 2006; 2010)
 GroenLinks - GL (1998; 2006; 2010)
 Socialist Party - SP (1998; 2006; 2010)
 Christian Union - CU (2006; 2010)
 Party for Freedom - PVV (2006; 2010)
 Reformed Political Party - SGP (2006; 2010)
Norway Labour Party - Ap (1997; 2005; 2009; 2013; 2017)
 Conservative Party - H (1997; 2005; 2009; 2013; 2017)
 Progress Party - FrP (1997; 2005; 2009; 2013; 2017)
 Socialist Left Party - SV (1997; 2005; 2009; 2013; 2017)
 Christian Democratic Party - KrF (1997; 2005; 2009; 2013; 2017)
 Centre Party - Sp (1997; 2005; 2009; 2013; 2017)
 Liberal Party - V (2005; 2009; 2013; 2017)
 Red Party - R (2005; 2009; 2017)
 Green Party - MDG (2017)
Portugal Socialist Party - PS (2002; 2009; 2015; 2019)
 Social Democratic Party - PSD (2002; 2009; 2019)
 Democratic Social Centre-People's Party - CDS-PP (2002; 2009; 2019)
 Portugal Ahead - PàF (PSD + CDS-PP) (2015)
 Left Bloc - BE (2002; 2009; 2015; 2019)
 Unitary Democratic Coalition - CDU (2002; 2009; 2015; 2019)
 People Animals Nature - PAN (2019)
Spain Spanish Socialist Workers' Party - PSOE (1996; 2000; 2008)
 People's Party - PP (1996; 2000; 2008)
 United Left - IU (1996; 2000; 2008)
 Convergence and Union - CiU (1996; 2000; 2008)
 Basque Nationalist Party - PNV (1996; 2000; 2008)
 Republican Left of Catalonia - ERC (2008)
 Union, Progress and Democracy - UPyD (2008)
Sweden Social Democratic Party - SAP (1998; 2006; 2014; 2018)
 Moderate Party - M (1998; 2006; 2014; 2018)
 Centre Party - C (1998; 2006; 2014; 2018)
 Liberal People's Party - FP (1998; 2006; 2014) / Liberals - L (2018)
 Left Party - V (1998; 2006; 2014; 2018)

	Christian Democrats - KD (1998; 2006; 2014; 2018)
	Green Party - MP (2006; 2014; 2018)
	Feminist Initiative - FI (2014; 2018)
	Sweden Democrats - SD (2014; 2018)
Switzerland	Social Democratic Party - SPS/PSS (1999; 2007; 2011)
	Swiss People's Party - SVP/UDC (1999; 2007; 2011)
	Free Democratic Party/The Liberals - FDP/PLR (1999; 2007; 2011)
	Christian Democratic People's Party - CVP/PDC (1999; 2007; 2011)

Table A2. Descriptive statistics.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<i>Respondent level</i>					
Party Affective Polarisation (PAP)	73970	3.975	2.400	-10	10
Leader Affective Polarisation (LAP)	73970	3.307	2.684	-10	10
LAP-PAP	73970	-0.668	2.120	-19	20
In-Party Liking	73970	7.873	1.844	0	10
In-Leader Liking	73970	7.505	2.109	0	10
In-Leader Liking - In-Party Liking	73970	-0.369	1.788	-10	10
Out-Party Dislike	73970	6.102	1.651	0	10
Out-Leader Dislike	73970	5.802	1.825	0	10
Out-Leader Dislike - Out-Party Dislike	73970	-0.299	1.265	-10	10
Party Identification	91466	1.236	1.075	0	3
Left-Right Self-Placement	87011	5.110	2.312	0	10
Ideological Extremism	87011	1.780	1.415	0.004	5.996
Female	96410	0.511	-	0	1
Age	96326	49.044	17.450	16	106
<i>Education</i>					
Lower secondary or less	93805	0.307	-	0	1
Higher secondary	93805	0.458	-	0	1
University	93805	0.235	-	0	1
<i>Party-election level</i>					
Won Votes	367	0.518	-	0	1
Vote Change	367	0.220	5.546	-24.1	24
Vote Change Squared	367	30.727	63.075	0.000	580.810
Vote Change Cubed	367	-22.638	1315.144	-13997.520	13824.000
Party Size	367	14.536	11.179	0.5	44.5
Left-Right Placement	367	5.050	2.122	0.8	9.4
Ideological Extremism	367	1.799	1.121	0.0	4.4
New Party	367	0.049	-	0	1
<i>Respondent-out party-election level</i>					
Party Affective Polarisation (PAP)	376301	4.111	3.067	-10	10
Leader Affective Polarisation (LAP)	376301	3.423	3.291	-10	10
LAP-PAP	376301	-0.688	2.504	-20	20
Ideological Distance	552749	2.519	1.861	0	9.374

Source: CSES, Western European country-elections.

Table A3. Linear random intercept models. Party affective polarisation (PAP), leader affective polarisation (LAP) and LAP–PAP as dependent variables

VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: LAP	M3: LAP-PAP
<i>Individual level</i>			
Party Identification	0.687** (0.009)	0.591** (0.010)	-0.096** (0.008)
Left-Right Self-Placement	-0.027** (0.005)	-0.022** (0.005)	0.005 (0.005)
Ideological Extremism	0.360** (0.006)	0.326** (0.007)	-0.034** (0.006)
Female	0.141** (0.016)	0.197** (0.018)	0.056** (0.016)
Age	0.001* (0.001)	0.003** (0.001)	0.002** (0.000)
Higher secondary	-0.148** (0.022)	-0.159** (0.024)	-0.012 (0.021)
University	-0.147** (0.025)	-0.193** (0.027)	-0.048* (0.024)
<i>In-party-election level</i>			
Won Votes	0.254** (0.054)	0.573** (0.093)	0.307** (0.073)
Party Size	0.021** (0.002)	0.031** (0.004)	0.010** (0.003)
Left-Right Placement	-0.059** (0.013)	-0.081** (0.022)	-0.019 (0.017)
Ideological Extremism	-0.004 (0.024)	0.062 (0.041)	0.064* (0.032)
New Party	0.368** (0.140)	0.426+ (0.234)	0.093 (0.186)
Constant	1.845** (0.210)	0.832* (0.352)	-0.752** (0.279)
<i>Variance components</i>			
Random intercept between party-elections	0.173**	0.593**	0.361**
Random intercept between respondents	4.185**	5.084**	3.907**
Number of respondents	66143	66143	66143
Number of party-elections	367	367	367
Log likelihood	-141528.56	-148124.2	-139378.13
Wald chi2(68)	13467.81**	8650.91**	334.79**

Note: Country-election dummies included but not reported. Cells report coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
**p<0.01; *p<0.05; +p<0.1.

Source: CSES, Western European country-elections.

Table A4. Linear random intercept models. In-party Liking, in-leader liking and in-leader liking–in-party liking as dependent variables

VARIABLES	M1: In-Party Liking	M2: In-Leader Liking	M3: InLeader-InParty
<i>Individual level</i>			
Party Identification	0.581** (0.007)	0.513** (0.008)	-0.067** (0.007)
Left-Right Self-Placement	0.034** (0.004)	0.040** (0.004)	0.006 (0.004)
Ideological Extremism	0.232** (0.005)	0.213** (0.006)	-0.019** (0.005)
Female	0.165** (0.013)	0.183** (0.014)	0.019 (0.013)
Age	-0.003** (0.000)	0.005** (0.000)	0.008** (0.000)
Higher secondary	-0.053** (0.017)	-0.051** (0.020)	0.002 (0.018)
University	-0.043* (0.019)	-0.044* (0.022)	-0.000 (0.020)
<i>In-party-election level</i>			
Won Votes	0.184** (0.041)	0.462** (0.078)	0.275** (0.062)
Party Size	0.001 (0.002)	0.012** (0.004)	0.010** (0.003)
Left-Right Placement	-0.019+ (0.010)	-0.041* (0.018)	-0.017 (0.015)
Ideological Extremism	-0.031+ (0.018)	0.019 (0.035)	0.048+ (0.027)
New Party	0.069 (0.108)	0.106 (0.196)	0.042 (0.157)
Constant	5.742** (0.162)	4.638** (0.295)	-0.833** (0.235)
<i>Variance components</i>			
Random intercept between party-elections	0.101**	0.421**	0.256**
Random intercept between respondents	2.564**	3.356**	2.779**
<hr/>			
Number of respondents	66143	66143	66143
Number of party-elections	367	367	367
Log likelihood	-125319.08	-134403.38	-128111.59
Wald chi2(68)	12879.85**	8197.22**	593.25**

Note: Country-election dummies included but not reported. Cells report coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
**p<0.01; *p<0.05; +p<0.1.

Source: CSES, Western European country-elections.

Table A5. Linear random intercept models. Out-party dislike, out-leader dislike and out-leader dislike–out-party dislike as dependent variables

VARIABLES	M1: Out-Party Dislike	M2: Out-Leader Dislike	M3: OutLeader-OutParty
<i>Individual level</i>			
Party Identification	0.106** (0.006)	0.077** (0.007)	-0.029** (0.005)
Left-Right Self-Placement	-0.061** (0.003)	-0.062** (0.004)	-0.001 (0.003)
Ideological Extremism	0.129** (0.004)	0.114** (0.005)	-0.014** (0.004)
Female	-0.024* (0.011)	0.014 (0.012)	0.038** (0.009)
Age	0.004** (0.000)	-0.001** (0.000)	-0.006** (0.000)
Higher secondary	-0.095** (0.015)	-0.108** (0.016)	-0.013 (0.013)
University	-0.104** (0.017)	-0.150** (0.019)	-0.047** (0.014)
<i>In-party-election level</i>			
Won Votes	0.067* (0.034)	0.103* (0.043)	0.029 (0.025)
Party Size	0.020** (0.002)	0.020** (0.002)	-0.000 (0.001)
Left-Right Placement	-0.040** (0.008)	-0.040** (0.010)	0.001 (0.006)
Ideological Extremism	0.027+ (0.015)	0.043* (0.019)	0.015 (0.011)
New Party	0.305** (0.089)	0.348** (0.112)	0.057 (0.066)
Constant	6.116** (0.133)	6.188** (0.168)	0.064 (0.098)
<i>Variance components</i>			
Random intercept between party-elections	0.065**	0.115**	0.031**
Random intercept between respondents	2.000**	2.385**	1.439**
Number of respondents	66143	66143	66143
Number of party-elections	367	367	367
Log likelihood	-117080.81	-122954.01	-106146.93
Wald chi2(68)	4428.42**	3088.58**	1036.22**

Note: Country-election dummies included but not reported. Cells report coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. **p<0.01; *p<0.05; +p<0.1.

Source: CSES, Western European country-elections.

Table A6. Linear regression models with respondent fixed effects. Party affective polarisation (PAP), leader affective polarisation (LAP) and LAP-PAP as dependent variables

VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: LAP	M3: LAP-PAP
Ideological Distance	0.600** (0.027)	0.507** (0.028)	-0.093** (0.010)
Won Votes	-0.143+ (0.079)	-0.316** (0.112)	-0.173* (0.069)
Party Size	-0.035** (0.004)	-0.030** (0.005)	0.005+ (0.003)
Left-Right Placement	0.144** (0.021)	0.165** (0.028)	0.021 (0.013)
Ideological Extremism	0.050 (0.044)	-0.020 (0.051)	-0.071** (0.025)
New Party	0.607** (0.222)	0.758** (0.280)	0.151 (0.121)
Constant	2.158** (0.140)	1.759** (0.181)	-0.398** (0.092)
Number of respondent - out-party	360182	360182	360182
Number of respondents	70120	70120	70120
R-squared (within)	0.205	0.144	0.019

Note: Respondent fixed effects included. Standard errors are clustered by party-election. Cells report coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

Source: CSES, Western European country-elections.

Table A7. Linear random intercept models. Difference between leader affective polarisation and party affective polarisation (LAP–PAP), in-leader liking–in-party liking and out-leader dislike–out-party dislike as dependent variables

VARIABLES	M1: LAP-PAP	M2: InLeader-InParty	M3: OutLeader-OutParty
<i>Individual level</i>			
Party Identification	-0.096** (0.008)	-0.067** (0.007)	-0.029** (0.005)
Left-Right Self-Placement	0.005 (0.005)	0.006 (0.004)	-0.001 (0.003)
Ideological Extremism	-0.034** (0.006)	-0.019** (0.005)	-0.014** (0.004)
Female	0.056** (0.016)	0.019 (0.013)	0.038** (0.009)
Age	0.002** (0.000)	0.008** (0.000)	-0.006** (0.000)
Higher secondary	-0.012 (0.021)	0.001 (0.018)	-0.013 (0.013)
University	-0.047* (0.024)	-0.000 (0.020)	-0.046** (0.014)
<i>In-party-election level</i>			
Vote Change	0.038** (0.008)	0.033** (0.007)	0.004 (0.003)
Vote Change Squared	0.002** (0.001)	0.001* (0.001)	0.001** (0.000)
Vote Change Cubed	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Party Size	0.007* (0.003)	0.009** (0.003)	-0.001 (0.001)
Left-Right Placement	-0.024 (0.017)	-0.021 (0.015)	-0.000 (0.006)
Ideological Extremism	0.072* (0.032)	0.053* (0.027)	0.019+ (0.011)
New Party	-0.049 (0.193)	-0.047 (0.164)	-0.005 (0.068)
Constant	-0.554* (0.275)	-0.665** (0.233)	0.094 (0.096)
<i>Variance components</i>			
Random intercept between party-elections	0.346**	0.251**	0.029**
Random intercept between respondents	3.907**	2.779**	1.439**
Number of respondents	66143	66143	66143
Number of party-elections	367	367	367
Log likelihood	-139371.83	-128108.55	-106135.56
Wald chi2(70)	351.22**	601.52**	1100.68**

Note: Country-election dummies included but not reported. Cells report coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. **p<0.01; *p<0.05; +p<0.1.

Source: CSES, Western European country-elections.

Table A8. Linear regression model with respondent fixed effects. Difference between leader affective polarisation and party affective polarisation (LAP–PAP) as dependent variable. Cubic relationship

VARIABLES	M1: LAP-PAP
Ideological Distance	-0.094** (0.010)
Vote Change	-0.023** (0.008)
Vote Change Squared	-0.001** (0.000)
Vote Change Cubed	0.000 (0.000)
Party Size	0.007* (0.003)
Left-Right Placement	0.024+ (0.013)
Ideological Extremism	-0.073** (0.026)
New Party	0.241* (0.120)
Constant	-0.472** (0.088)
<hr/>	
Number of respondent - out-party	360182
Number of respondents	70120
R-squared (within)	0.021

Note: Respondent fixed effects included. Standard errors are clustered by party-election. Cells report coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

Source: CSES, Western European country-elections.

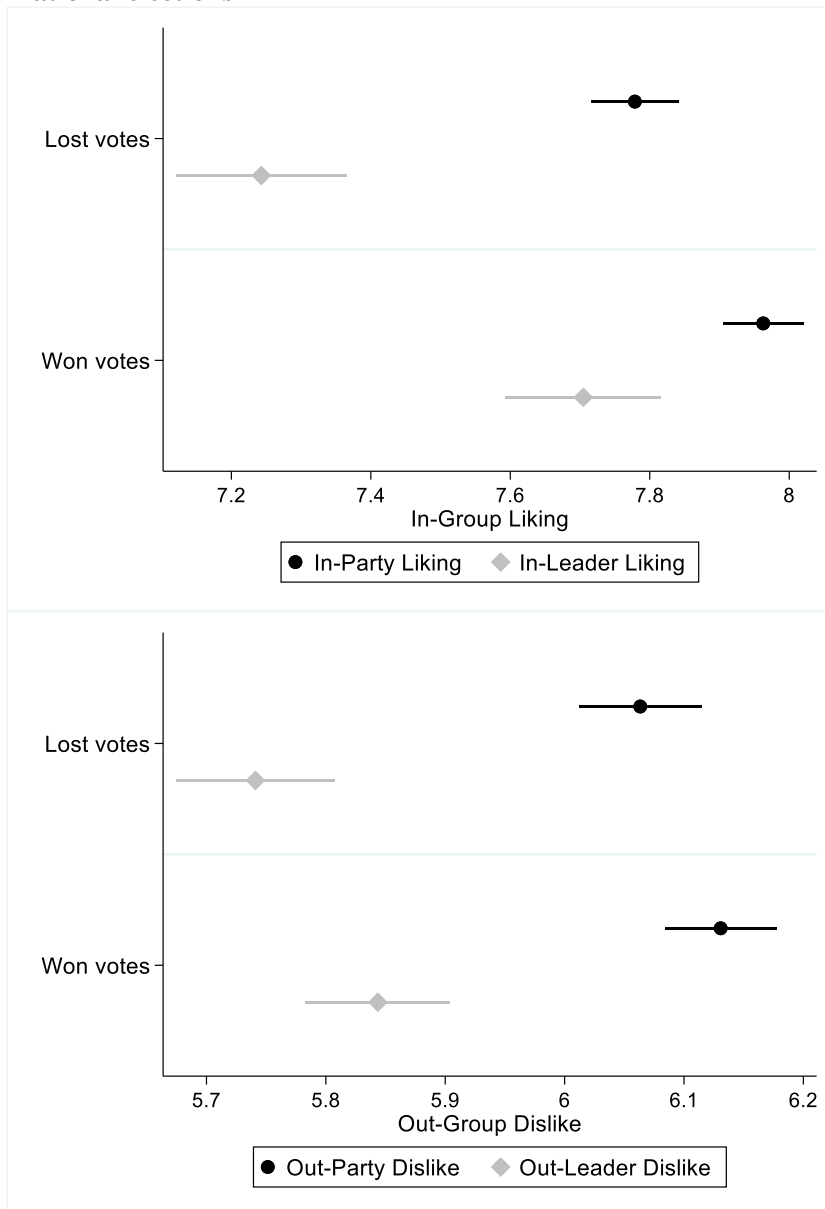
Table A9. Linear regression model with respondent fixed effects. Difference between leader affective polarisation and party affective polarisation (LAP–PAP) as dependent variable. ‘Won Votes X Ideological Distance’ interaction term included.

VARIABLES	M1: LAP-PAP
Ideological Distance	-0.104** (0.016)
Won Votes	-0.233* (0.089)
Won Votes X Ideological Distance	0.021 (0.017)
Party Size	0.005+ (0.003)
Left-Right Placement	0.021 (0.013)
Ideological Extremism	-0.071** (0.025)
New Party	0.157 (0.120)
Constant	-0.366** (0.095)
<hr/>	
Number of respondent - out-party	360182
Number of respondents	70120
R-squared (within)	0.019

Note: Respondent fixed effects included. Standard errors are clustered by party-election. Cells report coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

Source: CSES, Western European country-elections.

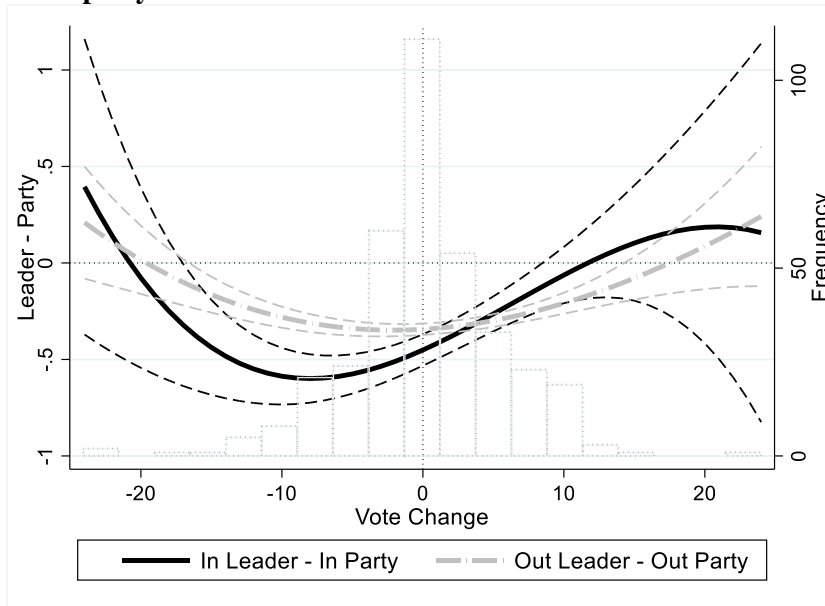
Figure A1. Predicted levels of in-party/in-leader liking and out-party/out-leader dislike, by in-parties that win and lose votes in national elections



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1 and 2 in Table A4 and Models 1 and 2 in Table A5.

Source: CSES, Western European country-elections.

Figure A2. Predicted levels of in-leader liking–in-party liking and out-leader dislike–out-party dislike across vote change levels of in-party



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 2 and 3 in Table A7.
 Source: CSES, Western European country-elections.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Citizens of democracies around the globe express substantive levels of hostility towards opposing parties, their leaders and, even, their rank-and-file supporters, a phenomenon that is usually labelled *affective polarisation* (e.g. Gidron et al. 2020). Citizens tend to hold more polarised sentiments towards parties than towards voters (e.g. Druckman and Levendusky 2019), so that some individuals are more likely than others to extend their antipathy towards opposing parties to the people who support them (Harteveld 2021a). Chapter 2 of this dissertation explores some of the factors that account for the gap between affective polarisation of the party and the voters. Increasing levels of antipathy between ordinary voters are associated with the deterioration of social relationships, political instability and the erosion of democratic values and institutions (e.g. McCoy and Somer 2019). The irruption of radical right parties also appears to be related to increasing levels of inter-partisan hostility, in the sense that radical right supporters express and, simultaneously, receive high levels of animosity (e.g. Helbling and Jungkunz 2020). However, we do not know if affective polarisation is simply a consequence of the rise of such parties or if partisan affective evaluations also precede the emergence of the radical right. Chapter 3 deals with this question. Finally, party leaders have gained centrality in most parliamentary and multiparty systems and some of them have increasingly played a divisive role (e.g. Bordignon 2020). Nevertheless, the literature analysing leader affective polarisation and comparing it with party affective polarisation is scarce, especially outside the United States (U.S.) (Reiljan et al. 2021). Chapter 4 analyses how parties' electoral results impact on the affective polarisation of the leader vis-à-vis the party.

The results from Chapter 2 of this dissertation signal, first, that the mean polarisation of feelings about parties is significantly higher than the polarisation of feelings about ordinary voters in Spain. Moreover, and similar to previous results (Iyengar et al. 2012), this difference is mainly attributed to out-group dislike, while the liking for the own party and its voters are quite similar in strength. Second, when an individual affectively evaluates an opposing party that is moderately far from her in ideological terms, she tends to differentiate the party from its voters and assess substantially worse the former than the latter. However, when the ideological distance is high, individuals tend to discern in a much lower degree the opposing party from its voters and extend the dislike for the former to the latter. Third, individuals whose social identities are aligned with their party

preferences tend to transfer their polarized feelings about parties to rank-and-file voters in a greater degree than individuals presenting low levels of social sorting. Finally, highly socially sorted individuals evaluate opposing parties and their voters similarly even if the ideological distance is moderate.

These findings have relevant implications, first, for the comparative studies that measure affective polarisation using feelings scales for parties (e.g. Reiljan 2020; Wagner 2021). These measures tend to overestimate the levels of hostility between ordinary partisans in a greater degree when the ideological discrepancies are moderate (compared to situation in which discrepancies are low or high) and in situations of cross-cutting social and political identities among the population (compared to situations in which these identities are highly aligned). These results complement the ones obtained by Hartevelde (2021a) in the Netherlands, where he finds that relying on party sympathy overestimates affective polarisation among those citizens with low levels of party identification or ideological extremism.

The implications for the consequences of affective polarisation are also significant. While some levels of party affective polarisation may have some positive repercussions for the well-functioning of a democratic system, in the sense that they tend to stimulate political involvement and participation (e.g. Ward and Tavits 2019), the polarisation of sentiments towards voters has more disturbing consequences (e.g. McCoy et al. 2018). Some scholars have suggested that focusing more the political debates on different positions around concrete policy-issues, and not so much on identity-based ideological disquisitions, would help to preserve the most positive implications of polarisation and, simultaneously, prevent hostilities from spreading to the level of ordinary voters (e.g. Miller 2020). Furthermore, the preservation of some ‘common ground’ in society is another relevant factor in maintaining some levels of cross-cutting identities among the population and containing inter-partisan hostilities (Mason 2018a). In this sense, Levendusky’s (2018) interestingly finds that priming American national identity in a civic sense reduces affective polarisation in broad sectors of American society, across lines of partisan strength, ethnicity and gender.

An additional finding that connects with Chapter 3 is that the hostility attracted by the Spanish radical right party VOX spill over to its voters in a greater degree than the antipathy attracted by the other parties. This is congruent with other studies indicating

that people supporting radical right parties and those supporting the rest of parties tend to substantially oppose each other (e.g. Hartevelde 2021a). This dissertation contributes to this literature by clarifying the relationship between the electoral emergence of radical right parties and the polarisation of feelings about voters. I develop, together with Professor Mariano Torcal, a theoretical framework of the affective roots and consequences of the initial electoral success of such parties that is tested for the case of VOX in Spain.

The results from Chapter 3 shows, on the one hand, that moderate right partisans holding, before the emergence of VOX, high levels of antipathy towards voters of left-wing parties and low levels of liking for the own partisan group were more prone to support VOX some months later (Bonikowski and Ziblatt 2019). On the other hand, the irruption of VOX fuelled affective polarisation, but for different intensities that varies by the partisan group. Those who switched their support to VOX experienced a greater increase in affective polarisation due to the strengthening of in-group liking (Torcal 2021). Regarding the rest of partisan groups, the affective reaction to the emergence of VOX appears to be a function of the levels of perceived threat posed by this party (e.g. Huddy et al. 2015). That is, left-wing partisans reacted to the success of VOX by polarising their feelings about partisans, while moderate right partisans did not suffer any significant increase in their polarisation levels.

These findings complement the study conducted by Bischof and Wagner (2019), according to which the radical right parties' first entrance into parliament pushes voters on both ideological sides to move towards the left-right extremes. This dissertation provides empirical evidence that the electoral emergence of the radical right has a similar impact of an affective type of polarisation, even controlling for the polarisation of ideological and issue positions among the population. Additionally, the rise of the radical right is also rooted in previous affective attitudes among moderate right supporters, which suggests that centre-right parties that conduct aggressive polarisation strategies may take the risk of facilitating the erosion of their own electorate in favour of more extreme electoral options. The Spanish case offers an interesting example of how the centrifugal polarisation strategies carried out by the Spanish centre-right parties *Partido Popular* and *Ciudadanos*, especially since the former lost power in favour of the socialist *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* in June 2018, helped pave the way for the rise of the hitherto marginal VOX (e.g. Rodríguez-Teruel 2021; Torcal 2021).

Finally, Chapter 4 deals with the polarisation of feelings for the leader vis-à-vis for the party. It is shown, first, that the mean levels of leader affective polarisation are substantially lower than the levels of party affective polarisation in Western Europe, congruent with Reiljan et al.'s (2021) results. In-leader liking is lower than in-party liking, while out-party dislike tends to be higher than out-leader dislike (Nilsson and Ekehammar 1987). Second, the electoral results of parties in national elections influence more the affective assessment of leaders than the evaluations of parties, which tend to be more consistent over time (Moon and Conlon 2002). Specifically, the affective evaluations of the leader of the own party are more positive when the party wins votes in an election (compared to the previous instance) than when the party loses support. The same occurs with the assessment of the own party, but the difference between those that win and lose votes is much smaller. Consequently, leader affective polarisation vis-à-vis party affective polarisation is lower in individuals whose in-party loses support than those whose in-party gains votes. The same logic is applied to the electoral results of individuals' out-parties: leader affective polarisation is less potent than party affective polarisation for electorally successful out-parties than for the out-parties that loses votes in national elections.

These findings are relevant in the light of the increasing centrality of leaders in most current democracies, including the parliamentary and/or multiparty party systems of Western Europe (e.g. Garzia et al. 2020; Garzia and da Silva 2021). Some scholars have detected the surge of strong, charismatic and/or populist party leaders whose 'image, style and personal history can become divisive issues themselves' (Bordignon 2020, p. 4). To the extent that this tendency towards a more personalized politics in which party leaders become new divisive lines is solid and increase in the future, the affective evaluation of leaders would gain influence in the general polarisation dynamics in Western Europe. Consequently, the results from this dissertation suggest that political polarisation would become more volatile and depend more on the electoral performance of specific parties and their leaders.

Another implication of the results presented in Chapter 4 is related to the effect of election campaigns on affective polarisation. Hernández et al. (2021) show that citizens progressively depolarise after elections. However, the intensity and pace of this depolarisation process may vary according to the success or failure of the voters'

preferred parties (or the electoral performance of evaluated out-parties), as well as according to whether the evaluated political object is the party or its leader.

5.1. Limitations and Future Lines of Research

This dissertation also presents some limitations and suggests future lines of research. A first general drawback is that I have not been able to use, in addition to the feelings scales, some more sophisticated measures of affective polarisation, such as distance measures or behaviour measures (Iyengar et al. 2019). These latter would have allowed me to test the extent to which polarised sentiments towards voters translate into aversion to entering into some kind of relationship with political opponents or some forms of discriminatory behaviour. Anyways, this dissertation employs feelings scales towards parties, their leaders and their voters, which implies a relevant improvement in the measurement of this phenomenon with respect to an important part of the comparative literature that only uses sentiments towards parties.

A second limitation, especially concerning Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, refers to the external validity of the results. As explained in previous sections of this dissertation, Spain is characterized by relatively high levels of affective and ideological polarisation (e.g. Torcal 2021), has experienced a deep transformation of its party system since the outbreak of the Great Recession (e.g. Rama et al. 2021) and different social and political cleavages have been strongly reinvigorated during the last decade, such as the territorial division (e.g. Rodon 2020). All of this probably makes Spain a ‘most-likely case’ to explore some of the roots and consequences of affective polarisation. Therefore, there could be reasonable doubts about the extent to which the results reported in the dissertation can be extrapolated to other national contexts characterized, for example, by lower levels of polarisation, a more consensus democratic system or a different articulation of social and political cleavages. In this sense, it should be noted that the results from Chapter 2 are congruent with some of the findings obtained by Hartevelt (2021a) in a quite different context such as that of the Netherlands. Anyways, further research should conduct similar analysis in other scenarios and, for the case of Chapter 3, for other recently rising radical right parties.

There are other limitations that refer to specific Chapters of this dissertation. In Chapter 2, the operationalisation of social sorting, based on Hartevelde (2021b), has two main caveats. The first one is that social identities are indirectly measured using socio-demographic variables, with the exception of the territorial identities that are captured by identity-based scales. The second caveat is that the social sorting index assumes that respondents are aware of how the different social identities are aligned with party lines. For future comparative research, it would be relevant to incorporate more sophisticated measures of social sorting in surveys.

A second limitation of the study conducted in Chapter 2 is that I have only been able to use the third wave of the E-DEM panel survey, which is the one that contains all the necessary information for the analysis. This prevents extrapolating any causal relationship between the analysed variables. More waves are needed to explore, for example, if within-individual increases in ideological distance with relation to an out-party over time have an impact on the gap between party and voter affective polarisation. Another interesting analysis would be the exploration of a possible reciprocal relationship between social sorting and the polarisation of feelings for voters. Concerning this last question, Robison and Moskowitz (2019) find, for the U.S. case and using panel data, that the polarisation of partisans' evaluations of social groups fuels affective polarisation over time, but that the latter is very weakly and inconsistently associated with the former.

Regarding the study conducted in Chapter 3, we argue that the competition dynamics and polarising strategies carried out by moderate right parties before the emergence of a radical right party increases the resentment of a portion of their electorate towards left-wing partisans; then, these affectively polarised electors would be the most likely to switch their support to the rising radical right. However, the empirical analysis only provides evidence of the link between prior affective attitudes among moderate right partisans and the probability of supporting the radical right in the future, assuming that the resentment towards left-wing partisans is due to centre-right parties' polarisation strategies. Although this assumption seems plausible in the light of the empirical evidence linking elite polarisation and animosity towards partisans of out-parties (e.g. Hartevelde 2021a), future research should disentangle in more detail and test the mechanisms by which polarisation strategies of centre-right elites may foster partisan animosity among part of their supporters. Similarly, we argue that the perception, among moderate right partisans, that their party is not consistent with its social-conservative

discourses leads to lower levels of in-group liking (contributing, in this way, to the emergence of the radical right), but we are not able to directly test this argument in our study.

Another limitation with regard to this Chapter 3 is that we have only been able to explore the short-term affective effects of the radical right's success. Bischof and Wagner (2019) show, using time-series cross-sectional data across 17 European countries, that the radical right party entry into parliament not only has a positive short-term effect on ideological polarisation among the population, but also an additional long-term impact. It would be interesting to explore if the same is applied to an affective type of polarisation. There could be the possibility that the polarising effects of the emergence of the radical right on partisan sentiments tend to diminish over time, but that they are reinforced again in the next election campaign (Hernández et al. 2021). More data and research are necessary to explore this expectation.

Chapter 4 explores how the electoral wins and losses of individuals' in- and out-parties affect the strength of leader affective polarisation vis-à-vis party affective polarisation. I measure electoral success or failure by comparing the results of parties in current national elections with those obtained in previous national elections. Future research, however, could explore alternative definitions, such as the difference between current electoral results and party expectations based on election polls some time before the election. Another possibility would be to measure success or failure as the party's ability to influence in the formation of the government after the election. The analysis, moreover, is restricted to Western European countries, which share some basic common social and political features. However, can the results reported in this Chapter be extrapolated to other regions? It would be interesting to extend the analysis, for example, to Central and Eastern European countries, which are characterized by higher levels of electoral volatility (e.g. Powell and Tucker 2014).

Apart from parties' electoral wins and losses, there could be other determinants of the gap between these two types of affective polarisation that should be tested in future research. One possibility is that populist parties tend to have more charismatic and controversial leaderships than mainstream parties, so that populist leaders may generate more polarised evaluations around them than leaders of mainstream parties. However, some find that charismatic leadership is not inherent to populist parties (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2014)

and that mainstream parties sometimes also produce divisive leaders (e.g. Bordignon 2014). Another interesting path of research would be to explore how different specific leaders' traits affect leader affective polarisation and party affective polarisation. The evolution of the gap between these two measures over time should also be analysed in detail. Considering previous studies that report an increasing presidentialisation of political regimes (e.g. Poguntke and Webb 2005), it would be observed that leader affective polarisation has followed an upward trend and that the differences between affective evaluations of parties and their leaders are decreasing.

Finally, this dissertation leaves an important number of substantive questions related to the comparative study of affective polarisation untouched. For example, the relationship between ideological and affective polarisation in Europe could be explored more deeply by distinguishing between issue-based and identity-based types of ideology (Mason 2018b); there is also an on-going debate about the possible impact of social media consumption on affective polarisation that has so far been mainly restricted to the U.S. (Barberá 2020); another area of research would be the relationship between economic conditions and affective polarisation, both at the aggregate and at the individual level (e.g. Gidron et al. 2020); additionally, affective polarisation rooted in other political identities beyond partisanship is another area of research that deserves more attention (e.g. Hobolt et al. 2021).

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