VOTER-PARTY INCONGRUENCE AND AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION: A COMPARATIVE APPRAISAL

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BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY

2023

VOTER-PARTY INCONGRUENCE AND AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION: A COMPARATIVE APPRAISAL

Thesis submitted to the Institute for Graduate Studies in Social Sciences

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts

In

Political Science and International Relations

by

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Boğaziçi University

2023

Voter-Party Incongruence and Affective Polarization: A Comparative Appraisal

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ABSTRACT

Voter-Party Incongruence and Affective Polarization: A Comparative Appraisal

This thesis examines the relationship between party-voter congruence and affective polarization at individual and country level drawing on a cross-national dataset comprising 95 elections in 27 democracies. First part of the thesis focuses on the hypothesized relationship between party-voter congruence on the one hand and three affect measures, namely affective polarization, in-party affective evaluations and out-party affective evaluations on the other. Upon situating the notion of party-voter congruence within the literature, findings of the first chapter suggest that voter perceptions of party-voter congruence are linked to negative in-party evaluations and positive out-party evaluations, as well as significantly lower affective polarization scores at voter level. In the second part of the thesis, the existing literature on citizen-representative congruence and its possible links to affective polarization are presented. Testing the same hypotheses employed in voter-level analyses, findings in the second part of thesis suggest that increasing party-voter incongruence measured by the average distance of voters to their parties is associated with higher levels of affective polarization and more negative evaluations of other political parties. However, when congruence is measured by this average distance relative to the variance of voter self-placements in each partisan group, it is shown to curb affective polarization and yield more positive evaluations toward other parties.

ÖZET

Seçmen-Parti Uyuşmazlığı ve Duygusal Kutuplaşma: Karşılaştırmalı Bir Değerlendirme

Bu tez, 27 demokrasideki 95 seçimi kapsayan çok uluslu bir veri setinden yararlanarak parti-seçmen uyumu ile bireysel ve ülke düzeyinde duygusal kutuplaşma arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektedir. Tezin ilk bölümü, parti-seçmen uyumu ile duygusal kutuplaşma, parti içi duygusal değerlendirmeler ve parti dışı duygusal değerlendirmeler olmak üzere üç değişken arasındaki ilişkiye odaklanmaktadır. Parti-seçmen uyumu kavramını literatüre yerleştiren birinci bölümün bulguları, seçmenlerin parti-seçmen uyumuna ilişkin algılarının, olumsuz parti içi değerlendirmeler ve olumlu parti dışı değerlendirmelerle ve ayrıca daha düşük duygusal kutuplaşma düzeyleriyle bağlantılı olduğunu göstermektedir. Tezin ikinci bölümünde, yurttaş-temsilci uyumuna ilişkin literatür ve bunun duygusal kutuplaşmayla olası bağlantıları sunulmaktadır. Seçmen düzeyindeki analizlerde kullanılan aynı hipotezleri test eden tezin ikinci bölümündeki bulgular, seçmenlerin partilerine ortalama uzaklığıyla ölçülen parti-seçmen uyumsuzluğunun daha fazla duygusal kutuplaşma ve diğer siyasi partilerin daha olumsuz değerlendirmeleriyle ilişkili olduğunu göstermektedir. Bununla birlikte, uyum her bir partizan grubundaki seçmenlerin kendilerini yerleştirmelerinin varyansına göre bu ortalama uzaklıkla ölçüldüğünde, duygusal kutuplaşmayı engellediği ve diğer partilere karşı daha olumlu değerlendirmeler sağladığı gösterilmiştir.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Having found the chance to officially acknowledge my gratitude and love in a published format, I would like to thank my best friend and the sole companion in this life, İclal Karaca, for her presence in my life as a beacon. Had it not been for her affection, inquisitiveness, and patience, I could not have written my thesis in the way I wanted to. She has always been my guiding star as I navigated this havoc called life, and her presence has always soothed and encouraged me. Thank you so much for being the wonderful woman you are.

I would also like to express my gratitude toward my professors whose scope of academic profundity and vision molded my academic persona in outlook and substance. In this regard, dear Alper Yağcı's guidance as my thesis supervisor and as a researcher whose academic work inspired me has been indispensable. No less importantly, dear Mine Eder's vigor and thirst for academic research have been proven decisive in becoming who I am as well as the researcher I intend to be. Last but not the least, I would like to thank Mert Arslanalp for his contributions to the extent of my academic vision through the bodies of literature he introduced me to, as well as exquisite debates we had in his classes.

This thesis also signals the end of my seventh year in this beautiful institution called Boğaziçi, which I never have considered somewhere less than a home like thousands of its students, professors, and graduates. I wish nothing but the best for my beloved second home, Boğaziçi, in the years to come. Thank you for allowing space, comfort, and compassion to express myself and become who I am today.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER 2: PARTY-VOTER CONGRUENCE AND AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION AT VOTER LEVEL: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW 6

2.1 Affective polarization: partisan loyalties or ideology? 7

2.2 Party-voter disagreements and affective polarization 11

2.3 Studies on affective polarization outside the US context: issues 14

CHAPTER 3: VOTER-LEVEL ANALYSES ON PARTY-VOTER CONGRUENCE AND AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION 18

3.1 Data and research design 19

3.2 Empirical analyses and findings 26

3.3 Discussion and conclusions 34

CHAPTER 4: PARTY-VOTER CONGRUENCE AND AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION AT COUNTRY LEVEL: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW 37

4.1 Democratic representation and citizen-representative congruence 38

4.2 Party-voter congruence 40

4.3 Affective polarization in comparative perspective 47

CHAPTER 5: COUNTRY-LEVEL ANALYSES ON PARTY-VOTER CONGRUENCE AND AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION 49

5.1 Data and research design 50

5.2 Empirical analyses and findings 59

5.3 Discussion and conclusions 72

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION 76

APPENDIX A: ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL PARTIES INCLUDED IN THE SAMPLE 81

APPENDIX B: COUNTRY-LEVEL MODEL REPLICATIONS EXCLUDING SATISFACTION WITH DEMOCRACY 101

APPENDIX C: CMP PARAMETERS INCLUDED IN ELITE IDEOLOGICAL POLARIZATION SCORES 104

REFERENCES 105

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Summary Statistics 26

Table 2. Voter-Level Predictors of Affective Polarization 29

Table 3. Voter-Level Predictors of In-Party Affective Evaluations 30

Table 4. Voter-Level Predictors of Out-Party Affective Evaluations 32

Table 5. Pairwise correlation matrix 58

Table 6. OLS Estimates for API (Affective Polarization Index) Scores 66

Table 7. Fixed-Effects Estimates for API (Affective Polarization Index) Scores 66

Table 8. OLS Estimates for Out-Party Affective Evaluations 67

Table 9. Fixed-Effects Estimates for Out-Party Affective Evaluations 67

Table 10. OLS Estimates for In-Party Affective Evaluations 70

Table 11. Fixed-Effects Estimates for In-Party Affective Evaluations 70

LIST OF APPENDIX TABLES

Table B1. OLS Estimates for Affective Polarization Index (API) Scores 101

Table B2. Fixed-Effects Estimates for Affective Polarization Index (API) Scores 101

Table B3. OLS Estimates for Out-Party Affective Evaluations 102

Table B4. Fixed-Effects Estimates for Out-Party Affective Evaluations 102

Table B5. OLS Estimates for In-Party Affective Evaluations 103

Table B6. Fixed-Effects Estimates for In-Party Affective Evaluations 103

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Average Affective Polarization Index (API) scores by country 62

Figure 2. Average in-party thermometer scores by country 62

Figure 3. Average out-party thermometer scores by country 63

Figure 4. Average proximity scores by country 63

Figure 5. Average centrism scores by country 64

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Recent decades witnessed a proliferation in studies concerned with the surge and the deleterious effects of affective polarization in Western democracies. In a multitude of micro- and macro-level studies in the field, several factors have been discussed in explaining affective polarization, ranging from polarization on policy issues and ideological disagreements to the salience of partisan ties as forms of social identity that spur in- and out-group affective evaluations. Perceptions and actualities of party representativeness, as I will further proceed throughout the thesis, presents a puzzle whose relationship to affective polarization should be studied. On the one hand, if one adheres to the perspective that ideological polarization constitutes the main fault lines fueling affective polarization (Lelkes, 2021; Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016; Webster & Abramowitz, 2017), disagreement with the identified party is expected to drive negative evaluations and indeed, it has been shown that partisans affectively "punish" hypothetical candidates with contrasting policy preferences even in the face of party identification (Lelkes, 2021; Orr & Huber, 2020). On the other hand, if the significance of partisan ties as a social identity creating a "tribalist" form of in- and out-group evaluations is underscored, we may expect to see affective indifference based on motivated reasoning and defensiveness (Huddy et al., 2015, 2018) and even heightened out-group hatred due to a "lesser-of-the-evil" effect, meaning that decreasing in-party affect against the backdrop of policy disagreements could fuel out-party antipathy to retain the affective wedge between the identified party and outsiders (E. Groenendyk, 2018; E. W. Groenendyk, 2013a). From either standpoint,

the relationship between voter-party disagreements and affective polarization stands out as an important venue of research this thesis aims to address.

Studies on representativeness in the literature, on the other hand, have first and foremost been characterized by normative and descriptive appraisals of to what extent governments, legislatures, and political parties are representative of the citizens they claim to represent. As democratic regimes are often considered as the prerequisites for the actualization of public opinion, these studies are in effect interrogate if and to what degree liberal democracies perform one of their essential functions, mainly translating the public opinion to the political arena (Powell, 2000). Subsumed under the term *congruence* relating to the level of correspondence, citizen representation for the most part have been studied at the government level, mostly taking electoral systems as a possible factor explaining the variation of citizen representation in the government (Blais & Bodet, 2006; Golder & Stramski, 2010; J. D. Huber & Powell, 1994; McDONALD et al., 2004). Another strand, which is central to this study, has been concerned with how much political parties as the chief representatives of citizens in legislatures correspond to the opinion of their voters and existing research maintained that the current levels of party-voter congruence are a far cry from indicating a "perfect" degree of correspondence between the two along different policy agendas (Belchior, 2010, 2013; Dalton, 1985, 2017; Mattila & Raunio, 2006; Schmitt & Thomassen, 1999). Moving beyond descriptive narratives of party-voter congruence as a function of party representativeness, recent studies also pointed out to possible effects on political behavior, such as electoral turnout (Lefkofridi et al., 2014), the tendency to vote for anti-system parties (Bakker et al., 2020), and vote switching (Bakker et al., 2018). More recently, it has also been shown that party-voter incongruence at voter level is linked to lower degrees of

affective polarization with curbing positive affective evaluations for the identified party and boosting positive affective evaluations for parties other than one's own among the British electorate (Marchal & Watson, 2022). However, these findings are yet to be corroborated by a comparative study, and this study aims at filling this gap.

In an endeavor to address this gap, this thesis will elaborate on the relationship between party-voter incongruence and affective polarization across 95 election cycles in 27 democracies at voter and election level based on the pooled CSES (Comparative Study of Electoral Systems) data. In this regard, two main research questions characterize the hypotheses and findings of my research. First, how is the degree of correspondence between voters and their identified parties linked to their in- and out-party affective evaluations as well as their net affective polarization levels? Second, how do the overall levels of party-voter congruence correspond to the aggregate levels of affective polarization across countries? In operationalizing party-voter congruence, a taxonomy of two axes is constructed. First, echoing Mayne and Hakhverdian's (2017) *egotropic* and *sociotropic* measures, the relationship between party-voter congruence and affective polarization analyzed at micro-scale (voter) and macro-scale (country) levels. Second, a distinction is made between *perceived* and *expert-opinion based* levels of incongruence, in an attempt to address the confusion as to which source to resort for ascertaining party positions while measuring congruence (Powell, 2004).

Empirical results in this study present a rather intriguing picture. Higher degrees of voter-level party-voter incongruence, as expected, is strongly associated with lesser degrees of affective polarization precipitated by negative affective evaluations of one's identified party and more positive evaluations of other parties in the system. On the other hand, cross-national analyses indicate that such an effect is

absent at the country-level and to the contrary, higher levels of *perceived* party-voter incongruence in a polity are linked to significantly more negative affective evaluations toward other parties and increasing levels of affective polarization. As for congruence based on *expert* placements of political parties that account the for variation of ideological self-placements of partisans as formulized by Achen (1978), this negative relationship is absent and higher levels of party-voter incongruence seems to ameliorate affective polarization, hence presenting us a rather complex picture as to how party representation could be linked to the levels of affective polarization.

This consists of four main chapters. In the next chapter (Chapter 2), the relevant literature on the origins and drivers of affective polarization is discussed and where party-voter disagreements at voter level could be situated within this literature is laid out. In Chapter 3, three hypotheses derived from the existing literature elaborated in the second chapter will be tested drawing on cross-sectional survey data from our sample and the findings of the empirical analyses will be discussed. Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 revolve around our upcoming country-level analyses on party-voter congruence and affective polarization. In Chapter 4, debates on representation and citizen-representative congruence are presented with particular emphasis on studies concerning party-voter congruence in democracies, and more importantly, possible linkages through which party-voter congruence could be gauged with respect to trends in affective polarization. In Chapter 5, the country-level empirical analyses on macro-level party-voter congruence and affective polarization are conducted and the findings of our analyses are discussed. Finally, the preliminary findings of both our voter-level and country-level empirical analyses are

discussed in concordance and several possible implications for upcoming research are suggested.

CHAPTER 2

PARTY-VOTER CONGRUENCE AND AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION AT VOTER LEVEL: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In the simplest sense, affective polarization can be described as the distance between a voter's affective evaluations of the party she identifies with and her affective evaluations toward the other party or parties (Iyengar et al., 2012). As much as it is expected to observe major differences between the two among voters who identify with a political party, it has rather been the apprehension that affective polarization progressively reached new heights in the US that instigated copious studies in the field, where the related literature originated and flourished (Webster & Abramowitz, 2017). Briefly touched upon above, there has been an ongoing debate on the main driving force behind increasing levels of affective polarization in the US electorate and elsewhere and so far, several major strands of explanations have been laid out to explain the worrying trend. In this chapter, I will review the main pillars of this ongoing debate and concomitantly argue that for each approach, the issue of representation subsumed under congruence presents a puzzle in affective polarization research that could be addressed. Finally, building on where party-voter disagreements might stand in predicting affective polarization with its in- and out-party components, I will lay out the hypotheses which will be tested in the upcoming chapter with empirical analysis.

2.1 Affective polarization: partisan loyalties or ideology?

Partisanship, or to be more exact, party identification as a form of *social identity,* has so far been discussed as one of the leading factors behind the reality of affective polarization (Dias & Lelkes, 2022; Huddy et al., 2015, 2018; Iyengar et al., 2012). Echoing previous debates in political psychology over what the very loaded term of partisanship substantively signifies and entails, this approach has conventionally underlined the suggestion that partisanship, at least in the context of United States, corresponded to a distinct form of social identity. The initial scholarly work of Greene (1999, 2004), in this line, adhere to the social psychology literature on group identities (Tajfel 1970; Tajfel and Turner 1979; Mael and Tetrick 1992) in understanding partisan identities, and when the social identity scale is adapted to party denominations, it yields remarkably significant results in predicting positive in-group affect and negative out-group evaluations. Directly adapted from Mael and Tetrick's (1992) *Identification with a Psychological Group* (IDPG) scale, Greene's devisal includes items measuring the degree to which partisans expressed group belonging, personalized hypothetical gains and losses of the identified group, or collective stereotypes (positive for the group of identification and negative for outsiders). This leap forward in the political behavior literature denotes a significant shift in decades-long debates on the nature of "partisanship", a very loaded concept, as well as what it entailed.

Building on this social-identity-based conceptualization of party identification, many studies concerning with affective polarization take partisanship as one of the main factors, if not *the* main one, in predicting and explaining the phenomenon, to the point where the sheer existence of a partisan identity is considered "enough" to trigger in-party favoritism and negative evaluations towards

the “other” party, overshadowing the possible influence of disagreements on a large variety of policy issues (Iyengar et al., 2012). Several complementary studies further elaborate into how partisan identities could be conceptualized by drawing a distinction between its *expressive* and *instrumental* manifestations (Bankert et al., 2017; Huddy et al., 2015, 2018). Accordingly, the *instrumental* vein mostly corresponds to “running-tally” approaches which associate partisanship with fed by retrospective perceptions of the ideological and/or policy-based overlap between voters and political parties (Fiorina, 1981), whereas the *expressive* vein bears resemblance with previously mentioned theories of partisanship as a distinct and sticky form of identity (Campbell, 1980; Greene, 1999, 2004). Moreover, in line with previous *social-identity* approaches, the *expressive* manifestation of party identification is argued to induce “the vilification of threatening out-parties”, “motivated reasoning on behalf of the identified party” and “inactivity even in the face of shifting policy platforms of parties”, very much to the contrary of what an *instrumentalist* form of party identification would anticipate (Bankert et al., 2017). On par with previously mentioned findings on the affect-based implications of partisanship as a social identity, studies based on expressive partisanship successfully predict parallel driving effects of expressive identification with emotive responses, such as anger or fear against the backdrop of hypothetical cases where the group status is threatened, as well as happiness in case the group status is elevated, both of which could primarily be exemplified with electoral gains and losses (Bankert et al., 2017; Huddy et al., 2015).

Contrary to identarian approaches as briefly introduced above, a second strand in the literature has pinpointed ideological disagreements and increasing levels of elite polarization as the primary driver for affective polarization based on

numerous studies. In their study based on survey experiment, for instance, Rogowski and Sutherland (2016) find that respondents who were presented "ideologically convergent" candidates, namely hypothetical candidates who are closer to their self-placement with more moderate views, express more positive affective evaluations. Webster and Abramowitz (2017), drawing on both longitudinal macro-level survey data from ANES (American National Election Studies) and the survey experiment they conducted, suggest that ideological and opinion-based proximity (or the absence thereof) to the opposite party the voters identified elicit more positive affective responses towards the out-party group and more intriguingly, results of their study maintain that the statistical effect of ideological proximity is larger than that of party identification in predicting out-party evaluations. A more recent experimental study by Lelkes (2021) also show that policy agreements with hypothetical candidates, even in the absence of information pertaining to the hypothetical candidate's political party, curb negative out-group emotive responses.

However, the hypothesized role of ideological and policy-based (dis)agreement in influencing affective evaluations towards one's identified party and "others" has been contested by studies underscoring the branded nature of several policy issues. First, existing literature has long highlighted the identarian components of ideological labels as well as their linkage to concrete policy preferences. Drawing a distinction between the identarian and value-based components of ideological self-placements in the US electorate along the liberal-conservative continuum, Malka and Lelkes (2010) suggest that there exists a variation in these two components' strength in predicting voter opinion on a multitude of policy issues, and more importantly, this variation can partly be explained by the "appropriateness" cues given by ideological labels. In other words,

stances on several policy issues or value judgments are influenced by what the voter thinks is "appropriate" with reference to her label as *liberal* or *conservative* rather than the other way around (Malka & Lelkes, 2010). Adapting the previously mentioned IDPG (Identification with a Psychological Group) scale to ideological self-placements as right-wing or left-wing, a recent study in Israel, a multiparty democracy, demonstraets that voters identified with these labels with parallel social-psychological elements (Oshri et al., 2022). Another objection is the very possibility that ideological labels and/or certain policy agendas are branded as partisan instead of affecting polarization in an isolate manner. A recent experimental study by Lelkes and Dias (2022) in the US demonstrated that although certain policy preferences mediate the driving effect of party identification in predicting the levels of affective polarization, this mediation effect is significantly weaker in "unbranded" policy issues such as licenses or data privacy. Moreover, when respondents are given cues on which political party endorsed a certain stance on one of these issue agendas, a similar drop in mediation is observed. In other words, the results of the study suggest that it is rather the "branded" characteristics of certain issues that spur affective polarization yet this component had been overlooked by the previously cited research body that highlighted the primacy of liberal-conservative scales and/or stances on issues like LGBTQ+ rights, redistributive policies, or healthcare (Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016; Webster & Abramowitz, 2017).

Partly resonating with this issue of "issue-branding" is the partisan *sorting* approach in explaining the surge of affective polarization along partisan lines. Initially discussed by Fiorina (2005, 2008) and Levendusky (2009), this perspective contend that while the American electorate has not become unprecedently polarized in the recent years, it has become more better *sorted*: voters increasingly adopt the

policy positions of their identified party. In the US context, in other words, the trend that the "Democrats becoming more liberal" and the "Republicans becoming more conservative" is discussed as a possible major factor driving affective polarization (Mason, 2015). In addition to the role of partisan cues in boosting the policy-based proximity between political parties and voters as such, it has also been argued that social and demographic variables too foster partisan sorting and concomitantly, affective polarization. In this regard, similar to policy-based alignments with the identified party, the overlap between religious and racial affiliations on the one hand and partisan affiliations on the other has also been shown to drive affective polarization (Mason, 2016).

2.2 Party-voter disagreements and affective polarization

Considering the main research question of the thesis, where party-voter disagreement in ideological and/or policy agenda terms remains a puzzle to be tested. On the one hand, identarian approaches – as pointed out above – conventionally stress the increasing impact of partisan loyalties in shaping voter affect towards the identified party even in the face of discordant or changing policy platforms (Bankert et al., 2017; Greene, 1999, 2004; Huddy et al., 2015; Levendusky, 2010). Therefore, intuitively, one would expect to observe little to no variation in in-party or out-party affective evaluations for partisan loyalties would trump the prospects of change. On the other hand, as Groenendyk (2013, 2018) points out, a different and contentious mechanism could be underway in yielding negative responses towards the identified party contrary to abovementioned expectations: while voters could possibly update their in-party affective evaluations in case they experience disagreement with their parties' policy platforms, this negative shift could be coupled with a complementary

shift in their out-party affective evaluations in the negative direction. Situating this rather counterintuitive hypothesis in a "competing motives" framework, Groenendyk contends that partisans, as expected by many accounts prioritizing ideological conformity and policy matches between voters and political parties, are responsive to cases of misalignment. Nevertheless, as partisan loyalties are in a constant flux of "rationalization" as partisans supposedly prefer a "better" party over a "worse" one, they update their affective evaluations of outsiders in a parallel fashion so that even in the face of ideological or policy-based mismatch, the "other" party/parties remain less preferable and consequently, party-based loyalties are retained. In this vein, one may also expect to see an intriguing chain where party-voter congruence could impact in- and out-party affective evaluations negatively.

From the vantage point of approaches underlining the policy dimension, party-voter disagreement would lead to weakening affective ties with the identified party and a significant drop in affective polarization scores as hinted at by the relevant literature above (Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016; Webster & Abramowitz, 2017) and indeed, recent findings suggest corroborate the intuition that partisans significantly punish hypothetical candidates with diverging policy views in updating their affective evaluations, pointing out the possibility that "animosity is driven by factors beyond and more relevant than partisan cues" (Orr & Huber, 2020).

In a similar vein, party-voter disagreement on ideological terms and/or policy issues would lead to a drop in in-party evaluations and boost in out-party evaluations, for the mismatch would constitute a *cross-cutting* interplay reducing the affectively polarizing impact of partisanship in forming affect if a "partisan sorting" perspective is adopted.(Mason, 2015, 2016). In this vein, if partisans do have diverging policy views or ideological placements in the face of strong partisan cues that often induce

them to update their policy stances and ideological positionings, this disagreement might be expected to curb affective polarization by reducing in-party favoritism and out-party bias discussed in the identarian approaches to partisan affiliations.

In a nutshell, regardless of whether we adopt identarian, ideology-based, or sorting-based approaches in gauging affective polarization with its in- and out-party elements, party-voter disagrement stands out as a puzzle whose relationship with polarization should be excavated. On the one hand, as underscored above, partisans negatively update their evaluations toward hypothetical candidates from the political party they identify with (E. Groenendyk, 2018; E. W. Groenendyk, 2013b; Orr & Huber, 2020). Therefore, we might expect to observe a net decrease in positive in-party affect in accordance with increasing party-voter disagreement. Therefore, our hypothesis could be formulized as

H1: Increased levels of party-voter disagreement are associated with a significant drop in in-party affective evaluation at voter level.

On the other hand, to what extent the party-voter disagreement could yield more positive evaluations toward other political parties remains a puzzle. Majority of studies on affective polarization originate from the two-party US context where hypothetically, the increasing distance between a voter and her identified political party signifies increased proximity with the "other" party in a unidimensional space and thus yield more positive evaluations (Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016; Webster & Abramowitz, 2017). When multiparty democracies are considered, however, this logic could not hold much traction. Nonetheless, Marchal and Watsons's (2022) recent study on the relationship between affective polarization and party-voter policy

congruence in the UK suggests that increasing voter disagreement with the identified political party brings about more positive evaluations toward other parties. Accordingly, our second hypothesis could be formulized as follows:

H2: Increased levels of party-voter disagreement are associated with a parallel increase in out-party affective evaluations at voter level.

Whether driven by negative in-party evaluations, more positive out-party evaluations, or both, we expect to see a net decrease in affective polarization levels. In this vein, our last hypothesis would be formulized as

H3: Increased levels of party-voter disagreement are associated with decreasing levels of affective polarization as the overall difference between in-party and out-party evaluations at voter level.

Before proceeding to the empirical analysis to test these hypotheses, a brief overview of the studies on affective polarization outside the United States context is to be made.

2.3 Studies on affective polarization outside the US context: issues

Bulk of the relevant literature on affective polarization reviewed above has originated from the US context. There is, however, a growing body of research on affective polarization in the party systems elsewhere. As the phenomenon under study is by no means endemic to United States and as the severity of affective polarization at country level is not unmatched in the United States (Reiljan, 2020; Wagner, 2021), these studies adapt the theoretical and methodological approaches in

the literature to various Western democracies in case studies and to a lesser extent, comparative research designs. In addition to contributing to the overall polarization literature, these studies underscore possible diverging factors that drive or limit affective polarization in different cases. For this chapter of the thesis takes affective polarization at voter level as its main response variable, comparative country-level research on the trends in affective polarization will further be expounded in the second chapter.

One of the major distinctions that directly shape the empirical strategies to affective polarization in contexts outside the US is that most, if not all, party systems under study are multiparty systems. From purely methodological standpoint, calculating out-party affective evaluations as well as affective polarization scores as the difference between in- and out-party evaluations in the US seems simple due to the virtual absence of a third political party[1], whereas such simplicity is absent from the multiparty systems elsewhere in the world, particularly Western democracies where a much larger number of political parties compete in their respective party systems. For the bulk of research outside the United States elaborated on the polarization at country-election level and thus devised formulae to measure in-party ratings, out-party ratings, and affective polarization scores (Boxell et al., 2020; Gidron et al., 2020, 2022; Reiljan, 2020), providing valid and voter-level measures suited for multiparty systems has stood out as a crucial task awaiting.

Following the debates revolving around the origins and drivers of affective polarization as laid out above, a series of cross-national and case studies at voter level present remarkable findings. One essential theoretical and methodological

[1] See Greene 2004 for an interesting discussion on whether independent self-placements in the United States context signifies a separate locus of identification similar to identifying as a Republican or Democrat.

novelty arise from the fact that most multiparty systems in Western democracies are characterized by electoral alliances and coalitions governments rather than the competition and contestation between two political parties. As voters of political parties belonging to the same bloc or alliance would intuitively indicate more sympathy toward parties within, several studies opted for measuring affective polarization as the difference between in- and out-bloc affective evaluations in countries were political parties are frequently organized along ideological blocs and indeed, find that policy-based disagreements drive affective polarization across these blocs (Comellas & Torcal, 2023; Knudsen, 2021; Orriols & León, 2020; Reiljan & Ryan, 2021). Another dividing line between political competition in the United States and elsewhere in Western democracies, coalition governments, have been studied with regard to trends in affective polarization and as expected, voters of the parties in the same governing coalitions have been shown to readjust their affective evaluations toward other parties in the coalition positively (Bassan-Nygate & Weiss, 2022; Gidron et al., 2022), partly stemming from the trend that voters observe the ideological proximity between coalition members to increase over time (Fortunato & Stevenson, 2013).

Wagner (2021) opts for a more expansive approach in studying the correlates of affective polarization in multiparty systems in an explorative fashion. Using pooled data from 166 election cycles in 51 countries, his research studies the relationship between affective polarization on the one hand and a series of predictors such as party identification, perceived party polarization, political participation, party identification, and satisfaction with democracy at voter level on the other. In doing so, he devises four alternative ways to measure affective polarization in multi-party contexts, one of which is to be employed in this study, and finds that higher levels of

affective polarization at voter level are associated with lower degrees of democratic satisfaction, higher propensity to have party identification, higher levels of perceived party polarization, and increased political participation. However, one of the main shortcomings of this research was that while he included country fixed-effects in his regression models at election level, he did not use robust standard errors whose absence often leads to inflated significance levels and heteroskedasticity issues (Abadie et al., 2017; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). Because this study too will draw on pooled data from 95 election cycles in 27 democracies in a similar vein, fixed effects *as well as* clustered standard errors at election level will be used to address these possible risks of inference.

CHAPTER 3

VOTER-LEVEL ANALYSES ON PARTY-VOTER CONGRUENCE AND AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION

In this chapter, voter-level empirical analyses on the hypothesized relationship between party-voter congruence and affective polarization with its in- and out-party affect components will be conducted. Building on the theoretical debates and the existing literature on affective polarization, three main hypothesis presented in the previous chapter will be tested. Drawing on a compiled country-election sample consisting of 95 elections in 27 democracies extracted from the CSES (Comparative Study of Electoral Systems), empirical findings in this chapter indeed suggest that lower degrees of party-voter congruence at voter level are significantly associated with more negative evaluations toward the party of identification, more positive evaluations toward other political parties in the system, and a considerable drop in individual affective polarization scores. Models that predict in-party evaluations, out-party evaluations, and affective polarization scores account for election-level fixed effects and include clustered standard errors at election level to address heteroskedasticity concerns.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. In the first section, the dataset and the variable operationalization strategies employed in our analyses will be presented with respect to the existing literature introduced in the previous chapter. In the second, the baseline models will be presented in detail. In the last section, our results and the possible implications of our findings will be discussed.

3.1 Data and research design

In this section, I lay out the specificities of variable operationalization and main empirical strategies I will employ in conducting empirical analysis. As previously stated, my main research question, namely how party-voter congruence is related to affective polarization, is formulated at voter level. In explaining the variation in affective polarization with respect to party-voter disagreements in addition to a set of control variables and demographic controls, three outcome variables are employed as to check whether there are differential effects: in-party affective evaluations, out-party affective evaluations, and affective polarization scores. I will draw on the Integrated Module of the CSES (Comparative Study of Electoral Systems) database covering a timespan of 20 years with elections in the 1996-2016 period. My effective sample consists of 95 surveys in 27 countries in Europe, Asia, and North America to boost the external validity of findings.

In virtually all CSES surveys, respondents are asked if they feel close to a political party and if so, which one. On par with most studies on affective polarization, only the partisans and leaners who clearly identify a political party are included in the analysis. Several variables of interest, including affective polarization scores, in- and out-party affective evaluations, ideological self-placements, ideological placements of other parties in the system as well as the effective proximity between self-placements and placements for the parties of identification rely on the party toward which respondents expressed closeness to, accordingly.

There are two major caveats linked to three main outcome variables – in-party affective evaluations, out-party affective evaluations and affective polarization scores – and the main independent variable of interest, voter-party incongruence. The first caveat is that due to lack of data on several other measures of affective

polarization, such as questions on how the respondent would feel if her child married from the supporter of another party or items on the stereotypes of people from other parties (Iyengar et al., 2012), a simple thermometer scale ranging from 0 to 10 will be used to tap into my dependent variables. Adding onto the impossibility of obtaining such data in such a multitude of cases and election cycles, thermometer scales do significantly correlate with other measures of affective polarization (Druckman & Levendusky, 2019), and they have been used in a vast array of comparative studies (Boxell et al., 2020; Gidron et al., 2020, 2022; Reiljan, 2020) and case studies (Comellas & Torcal, 2023; Harteveld, 2021b, 2021a; Orriols & León, 2020; Reiljan & Ryan, 2021).

The second, and more serious, caveat is linked to the very usage of the conventional standard left-right scale. What the terms "left" and "right" substantially entail or signify has traditionally been subject a long debate: how respondents place themselves on a left-right scale has been found to be influenced by party affiliations as much as value orientations that are supposed to characterize their ideological self-expressions (J. D. Huber, 1989; Knutsen, 1998), value orientations and policy preferences that are associated with the "left" and the "right" have undergone drastic changes in Western societies (R. Inglehart, 1990, 1997; R. F. Inglehart, 2021), and these associations significantly vary by context (Zuell & Scholz, 2019). On the other hand, in Lesschaeve's (2017, 10) words, this study is not concerned with what "left" and "right" essentially means but rather, what their distinction "does". Regardless of the variation in its meaning across time and contexts, the left-right divide could be understood as an informational cue in a complex political reality and indeed, a reflection of the dimension of political contestation in a political system (Fuchs & Klingemann, 1990). Moreover, regardless of the validity concerns pointed above, the

very terms “left” and “right” remain constituting one of the main divisions around which political parties frame their policies (Dalton & McAllister, 2015; J. Huber & Inglehart, 1995). Building on this logic, copious studies make use of respondents’ left-right placement of themselves and political parties as proxies for party system polarization (Curini & Hino, 2012; Dalton, 2008) and self-expressed extremism (Fortunato, 2019; Fortunato & Adams, 2015; Ward & Tavits, 2019). In a similar intuition, I will opt for measures on perceived party polarization, self-expressed extremism, as well as party-voter congruence (perceived and expert-based) based on respondent placements.

3.1.1 Dependent variables

Respondents’ in-party affective evaluations are coded in a straightforward fashion: the thermometer score they assigned to the political party they expressed closeness to in surveys. In order to assess the level of out-party affective evaluations, the thermometer scores respondents assigned to the parties other than the party they expressed closeness with are used. As I aim to obtain an overall score for out-party affective evaluations rather than how each voter evaluated each party in the system, the thermometer scores assigned to each political party are weighted by the vote share of that party in the total percentage of votes excluding the identified party. In other words, I take a weighted average of thermometer scores assigned to each political party except one’s own by their vote share. This measure could be formulized as follows:

$$\sum_{p=1}^{P} \frac{v_p * (like_{ip})}{(v_{total} - v_j)}$$

where in a system with $P + 1$ number of political parties, a voter identifying with the Party *j* evaluates all political parties other than her own.

Lastly, Wagner's (2021) measure of dispersion is employed in order to measure overall affective polarization score at voter level. Proceeding from the intuition that most cases of multiparty systems comprise ideological blocs whose partisan demonstrate more positive affect toward in-bloc parties as underlined above, this measure simply taps into how the thermometer score assigned to each political party deviate from the average thermometer score a voter assigns to a political party, and this average thermometer score is again weighted by the vote share of each political party. This measure could be formulized as follows:

$$\sqrt{\sum_{p=1}^{P} v_p * \left(like_p - \overline{like}\right)^2}$$

where the average thermometer score, $\overline{like}$, is calculated as the weighted average of thermometer scores assigned to each political party, which is:

$$\sum_{p=1}^{P} v_p * like_p$$

3.1.2 Independent variables

Party-voter congruence

As briefly outlined in the introduction, I employ two strategies to measure party-voter congruence: *perceived* congruence and congruence based on *expert placements*. The former relies on a simple tactic, namely, where a voter placed herself and the party she expressed closeness to on a scale. Because the scale I use is the standard left-right scale ranging from 0 to 10 where voters place themselves and political parties in the system, the absolute difference between the voter self-placement and where the identified party is placed by the same voter gives us a proxy of perceived voter-party congruence. As for expert opinions on where parties are located, the placements made by CSES collaborators who conduct the post-election surveys and provide the data to the CSES database are used. For both measures, higher values indicate further distance from a voter from the political party she expressed identification with.

If perceived and expert opinion-based measures of party-voter congruence are compared, we observe a rather intriguing picture. The Pearson-r coefficient for two variables in the pooled dataset is a meager 0.166, indicating that there is a remarkable divergence between the perceptions of party ideologies by partisans and leaners on the one hand and expert placements on the other. Moreover, while the mean perceived party-voter congruence score is around 1.2 units on the 11-item left-right scale, the same value relying on country expert placements is 1.7, and the difference in these mean values are significant ($p < 2.2e\text{-}16$). This difference not only validates the using two separate measures for party-voter congruence but also possibly resonates with existing literature that underscores the confounding factors shaping partisans' placements of themselves and political parties they identify with (Fuchs & Klingemann, 1990; Knutsen, 1998).

Perceived party polarization

To control for the effect of ideological polarization on affective evaluations as laid out by the existing literature perceived party polarization is included in the models. Following Wagner (2021) who use Dalton's (2008) formula to measure perceived party polarization and similar to the affective polarization measure, perceived party polarization is calculated as the dispersion of voters' left-right placements of each political party from the average left-right score they assigned, weighted by the vote share of each party. In this regard, it could be formulized as

$$\sqrt{\sum_{p=1}^{P} v_p * \left(placement_p - \overline{placement}\right)^2}$$

where the mean left-right placement is calculated as

$$\sum_{p=1}^{P} v_p * placement_p$$

Extremism

Findings of the existing literature frequently underline the propensity of self-expressed extremist voters to demonstrate higher levels of affective polarization (Druckman et al., 2022; Lelkes, 2021; Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016; Ward & Tavits, 2019). To control for the extremism effects, a simple measure of extremism is included in the model as the absolute difference between the left-right self-placement of a voter and 5, the median score on the 0 to 10 left-right scale.

PID (party identification) strength

Voters who clearly identify a party to which they express closeness are asked about the degree to which they feel close to in CSES surveys ranging from 1, which corresponds to "very close", to 3, which in turn corresponds to "not very close". In this ordinal scheme, 2 corresponds to "somewhat close". To control for the strength of partisan affiliatiopns in predicting affective evaluations, this measure is employed.

Satisfaction with democracy and demographic controls

Wagner (2021) includes the level of voter satisfaction with democracy as a key outcome variable predicted by affective polarization due to previous findings that ideological polarization boosts political participation (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; Smets & van Ham, 2013) and party systems with higher levels of party extremism have lower overall degrees of satisfaction with democracy (Ezrow & Xezonakis, 2011), while increased political participation (Huddy et al., 2015) and ideological polarization (Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016; Webster & Abramowitz, 2017) are found to be associated with affective polarization. It has also been maintained that voters who feel less represented have lower degrees of democratic satisfaction (Aarts & Thomassen, 2008), linking us to the main predictor of interest in this study, namely the party-voter incongruence. Lastly, recent studies suggest that partisan ties are linked to higher degrees of democratic satisfaction accounting for thermometer scores toward the identified party and other parties in the system (Ridge, 2022), and democratic dissatisfaction correlates with higher levels of affective polarization (Guedes-Neto, 2023).

To test whether democratic satisfaction operates as an intervening variable in predicting affective polarization with its in- and out-party components, therefore,

democratic satisfaction is included as a control variable in the regression models. Because the Satisfaction with Democracy battery included in CSES surveys consist of 4 ordinal levels (1 = very satisfied, 2 = fairly satisfied, 4 = not very satisfied, 5 = not at all satisfied) devoid of a median corresponding to the absence of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, a binary predictor is constructed based on whether the respondent is satisfied or not. Age, gender, and the level of education are included as demographic controls.

Table 1. Summary Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Pctl. 25	Pctl. 75	Max
Age	60258	48	17	16	35	61	102
Female	60258	0.48	0.5	0	0	1	1
Education Level	60258	1.9	0.8	0	1	3	3
Extremism	60258	2.1	1.6	0	1	3	5
Satisfaction with Democracy	60258	0.67	0.47	0	0	1	1
Perceived Party Polarization	60258	2.6	1.2	0	1.9	3.3	15
Incongruence (Perceived)	60258	1.2	1.5	0	0	2	10
Incongruence (Expert Placement)	60258	1.7	1.5	0	1	2	10
In-Party Evaluations	60258	8.1	1.8	0	7	10	10
Out-Party Evaluations	60258	3.6	1.8	0	2.4	4.9	10
Affective Polarization	60258	2.6	1.1	0	1.9	3.4	5

3.2 Empirical analyses and findings

To test my three main hypothesis, I conduct six regression models predicting affective polarization scores, in-party evaluations, and out-party evaluations with perceived and expert placement-based measures of party-voter congruence in addition to the abovementioned predictors of interest. These regressions include pooling fixed-effects and clustered robust standard errors to control for heteroskedasticity concerns, both of which are applied at the election level. Regression coefficients are unstandardized since fixed-effect models as well as clustered standard errors are employed in conferring estimations.

Table 2 presents the estimated effects of selected predictors on overall affective polarization scores. In line with hypothetical predictions, higher degrees of party-voter incongruence are associated with a significant decrease in overall affective polarization scores at voter level, yet this effect is reserved for *perceived* incongruence. Increasing mismatch between partisans and identified parties based on the left-right placements of country experts do not seem to drive or curb affective polarization. This differential impact is intriguing considering that the level of *perceived* incongruence on average, as previously suggested, seem to be significantly lower than the level of congruence measured with the party placements made by country experts. Per maintained by the existing literature, party polarization, partisan strength, and self-expressed extremism seem to be significantly associated with affective polarization. Contrary to the findings by Wagner (2021), whether a voter is satisfied with democracy does not seem to hold an effect on how affectively polarized that voter is. Lastly, all conventional control variables have statistically significant effects on the level of affective polarization: older and female respondents seem to be more polarized whereas as the level of education increases, we observe lower degrees of polarization.

On the other hand, a disperse measure of affective polarization is not sufficient to make detailed inferences regarding the effects of our predictors, primarily party-voter incongruence, on the in- and out-party components of affective polarization. To test the Hypotheses 2 and 3, two separate sets of linear regression models with the same fixed-effects and robust standard errors strategies. Like in the previous set of regression models, two separate measures of party-voter incongruence distinguishing between perceived and expert-based party placements.

Results of regression models predicting in- and out-party affective evaluations are presented in Table 2 and Table 3, respectively.

Paralleling the models predicting overall affective polarization scores, the results indicate that voters who perceive their parties of identification farther from themselves have less positive affective evaluations toward their parties. Contrary to the distinction between perceived and expert placement-based measures of congruence in predicting affective polarization scores, however, both measures seem significantly associated with more negative in-party evaluations though the latter indicating an impact with a weaker coefficient. Partisans who express more closeness to their parties, perceive higher degrees of ideological polarization between the parties in the system, and place themselves further to the ends of the left-right spectrum are predicted to develop significantly more positive evaluations toward the party they identify.

Table 2. Voter-Level Predictors of Affective Polarization

	Dependent variable:	
	Affective Polarization	
	(1)	(2)
Age	0.003***	0.003***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Female	0.072***	0.072***
	(0.014)	(0.014)
Education Level	−0.053***	−0.052***
	(0.020)	(0.020)
Extremism	0.113***	0.119***
	(0.017)	(0.016)
Satisfaction with Democracy	−0.035	−0.033
	(0.027)	(0.028)
Perceived Party Polarization	0.328***	0.324***
	(0.070)	(0.068)
PID Strength	0.194***	0.197***
	(0.059)	(0.059)
Incongruence (Perceived)	−0.023***	
	(0.008)	
Incongruence (Expert Placement)		−0.008
		(0.007)
Constant	1.163***	1.139***
	(0.141)	(0.143)
Observations	60,258	60,258
R^2	0.232	0.231
Adjusted R^2	0.232	0.231
F Statistic (df = 8; 60249)	2,271.118***	2,260.038***
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table 3. Voter-Level Predictors of In-Party Affective Evaluations

	Dependent variable:	
	In-Party Evaluations	
	(1)	(2)
Age	−0.001	−0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Female	0.119***	0.118***
	(0.019)	(0.019)
Education Level	−0.133***	−0.130***
	(0.021)	(0.021)
Extremism	0.172***	0.196***
	(0.016)	(0.016)
Satisfaction with Democracy	0.237***	0.251***
	(0.038)	(0.039)
Perceived Party Polarization	0.253***	0.233***
	(0.058)	(0.053)
PID Strength	0.519***	0.531***
	(0.099)	(0.099)
Incongruence (Perceived)	−0.109***	
	(0.013)	
Incongruence (Expert Placement)		−0.032***
		(0.012)
Constant	6.336***	6.213***
	(0.166)	(0.166)
Observations	60,258	60,258
R^2	0.137	0.129
Adjusted R^2	0.136	0.129
F Statistic (df = 8; 60249)	1,191.521***	1,118.317***
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Democratic satisfaction, whose relationship to affective polarization levels is proven inconclusive, seems to make a positive shift in in-party affective evaluations to a considerable degree: a voter who expresses satisfaction with democracy is predicted to be 0.237 units more positive toward the party she identifies with on a 0-10 thermometer scale, approximating the driving impact of perceived party polarization (0.253). As for demographic controls, we observe that female partisans are more inclined to develop more positive in-party evaluations whereas more educated voters tend to feel less positive compared to their less educated counterparts. Age, which was observed to significantly increase overall affective polarization scores albeit with a miniscule coefficient, seems almost completely irrelevant in its coefficient magnitude and the level of statistical significance.

Notwithstanding the relevance of the findings presented above, predictions for out-party evaluations among partisans constitute a more pressing puzzle to be addressed, as the bulk of affective polarization literature takes the increasing levels of out-group hatred as a worrying trend to be explained (Iyengar et al., 2012; Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016; Webster & Abramowitz, 2017). To see the implications of party-voter congruence for out-group affective evaluations, I replicate the regression models above retaining the independent variables as well as fixed-effects and robust standard error checks to predict out-party evaluations. Once again, two separate measures of party-voter congruence are employed to provide a more wholistic approach based on voter perceptions and expert placements. Regression output for the models is presented in Table 3.

Table 4. Voter-Level Predictors of Out-Party Affective Evaluations

	Dependent variable:	
	Out-Party Evaluations	
	(1)	(2)
Age	−0.003*	−0.003*
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Female	−0.008	−0.010
	(0.018)	(0.018)
Education Level	−0.019	−0.017
	(0.051)	(0.051)
Extremism	−0.047*	−0.062***
	(0.024)	(0.023)
Satisfaction with Democracy	0.465***	0.461***
	(0.051)	(0.052)
Perceived Party Polarization	−0.363***	−0.355***
	(0.090)	(0.087)
PID Strength	−0.115*	−0.120*
	(0.062)	(0.063)
Incongruence (Perceived)	0.045***	
	(0.013)	
Incongruence (Expert Placement)		0.027
		(0.019)
Constant	4.701***	4.730***
	(0.217)	(0.227)
Observations	60,258	60,258
R^2	0.091	0.090
Adjusted R^2	0.091	0.090
F Statistic (df = 8; 60249)	756.520***	748.034***
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Several findings diverging from the findings in the previous models are evident in our third model predicting out-party evaluations. First, higher degrees of party-voter incongruence are predicted to significantly curb negative out-party evaluations, whereas in contrast with in-party affect predictions and in line with our affective polarization estimates, this effect is confined to voter perceptions: the growing distance between political parties and voters on the left-right continuum spur more sympathy toward out-groups. Second, as opposed to its magnitude and significance in the models predicting affective polarization and in-party evaluations, increasing strength of partisanship seems meagerly associated negative out-party affective evaluations. Higher levels of perceived party polarization, on the other hand, retains its magnitude and significance in predicting negative out-party evaluations. If demographic variables are considered, older and male voters seem to develop more negative evaluations toward out-parties, whereas such a negative effect is absent among more educated voters. Recalling the effects of these controls on affective polarization scores and in-party evaluations, it seems evident that the curbing effect of the level of education on affective polarization is primarily driven by dropping in-party ratings instead of increasing sympathy for other parties.

Another finding of interest is the predicted effects of democratic satisfaction on out-party affective evaluations. Parallel to our previous findings on in-party ratings, voters who are satisfied with democracy are expected to demonstrate significantly more positive affective evaluations toward other parties by a large margin. Moreover, as both out-party evaluations and in-party evaluations range from 0 to 10 on a thermometer scale, this predicted positive effect of democratic satisfaction (0.465) is objectively bigger than its coefficient in predicting in-party ratings (0.237, see Table 3). The simultaneously positive impact of democratic satisfaction on in- and out-

party evaluations, in turn, seems to shed light on the absence of democratic satisfaction as a variable predicting overall affective polarization scores as presented in Table 2.

3.3 Discussion and conclusions

In this chapter of the thesis, I focused on bringing voter-level explanations for varying levels in affective polarization on the one hand and in- and out-party affective evaluations on the other with particular emphasis on party-voter incongruence. I employed two strategies to operationalize party-voter incongruence: *perceived* party-voter incongruence, constructed by taking the absolute distance between a voter's self-placement on the 11-item left-right scale and where she placed the party she expressed closeness to, and expert placement-based party-voter incongruence, based on the absolute distance between the voter self-placement and where the country experts in CSES placed the party she identifies.

Empirical analyses drawing on a pooled dataset consisting of 95 election cycles in 27 democracies lend support to the three main hypotheses of the chapter if voter perceptions are included in the analyses: voters who perceive a distance between themselves and their parties of identification are affective polarized to a lesser degree, with significantly lower in-party affective evaluations and higher out-party evaluations on average. When party-voter incongruence is measured relying on country expert placements, however, this strong correlation does not exist except for out-party evaluations, meaning both perceived and expert-based measures of incongruence are associated with more positive affect toward other political parties in the system. The predicted negative effect of a unit increase in perceived voter-

party incongruence is higher on in-party evaluations than its predicted positive effect on out-party affect.

Control variables included in the regression models show varying magnitudes and significance levels, however. Although perceived party polarization, the main proxy of ideological polarization, is significantly linked to affective polarization scores as well as in- and out-party evaluations, partisanship strength is shown to be linked to higher scores of affective polarization and in-party ratings only, seeming ineffective in shaping evaluations toward other parties. This ineffectiveness could be stemming from the fact that most cases in my sample are multiparty democracies where electoral alliances and coalition dynamics produce remarkable variations in forming different forms of political loyalties (González et al., 2008; Hagevi, 2015) out-party evaluations (Bassan-Nygate & Weiss, 2022; Gidron et al., 2022) or the commonly stated pattern that political competition in most multiparty democracies are organized around ideological rifts rather than exclusive partisan identities that are in decline (Dalton, 2002; J. D. Huber et al., 2005). Lastly, empirical analyses suggest that democratic satisfaction is linked to more positive evaluations toward both a voter's party of identification and other parties in the system simultaneously, as reflected in its the minimal and insignificant effect on overall affective polarization scores (see Table 2).

One possible shortcoming to be explicated further in the following chapter is that our measure of party-voter congruence is unidimensional and relies solely on the 11-item left-right scale. Although relying on the left-right spectrum stands out as the only viable option in conducting cross-national research covering 27 democracies within the boundaries of this thesis, adopting a more multidimensional approach in understanding which policy issues the voters differentiate themselves from their

parties remains a significant task to be addressed in future research, particularly for party systems where paralleling issue agendas shape debates and contestation in party politics such as redistribution, European integration, gender-based issues, and so forth.

In the next chapter, a country-level empirical strategy will be presented in anticipation to explain the variation and trends in macro-scale affective polarization in the same country-election employed in the voter-level analyses of this chapter.

CHAPTER 4

PARTY-VOTER CONGRUENCE AND AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION AT COUNTRY LEVEL: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

There has emerged a sizeable body of comparative research on affective polarization in the recent years (Boxell et al., 2020; Gidron et al., 2020, 2022; Lauka et al., 2018; Reiljan, 2020). Studies in this literature have conventionally adopted strategies to explain the variation in affective polarization across different countries and track the changes within countries over time with respect to elite ideological polarization, electoral systems, as well as an array of macroeconomic predictors. In this chapter, I will try to shed light on the growing literature of comparative affective polarization studies and theoretical and methodological insights from the citizen-policymaker congruence with particular emphasis on party representation (Achen, 1978; Belchior, 2010, 2013; Mattila & Raunio, 2006; Miller et al., 1994; Miller & Stokes, 1963; Schmitt & Thomassen, 1999).

Main insights regarding party-voter disagreement situated within the affective polarization framework will remain as the backbone of this chapter, however, as elucidated below, there has been no study in the citizen-representative literature that connects party-voter congruence to affective polarization with its in- and out-party components directly. Therefore, as much as theoretical linkages between citizen representation and affective polarization will be presented throughout this chapter, the baseline hypotheses leading our voter-level analyses in the previous chapter will be employed in a rather explorative fashion and the proceeding chapter centering on

country-level analyses of party-voter congruence and affective polarization will further inform us on the possible venues of research between the two political phenomena.

4.1 Democratic representation and citizen-representative congruence

Representation is one of the key normative elements underpinning liberal democratic regimes, and although there is a great deal of normative and descriptive debate on what constitutes *good representation*, this prescription could raise the stipulation that in democracies, there must be at least some degree of an overlap between citizen interests and the interests that representatives promote (Wessels 1999, 170). Partly inspired by this basic apprehension that democracies should guarantee citizen representation as regimes that supposedly ensure the correspondence of government with citizen preferences, there is a vast literature interrogating the extent to which representatives represent the public opinion. For representativeness entails a critical role in which democracies can be evaluated based on whether they can hold one of their central promises, this literature could be argued to assume a normative and descriptive function (McDONALD et al., 2004). Notwithstanding this normative emphasis on *representativeness* as a common denominator, the existing literature is diverse in at what level (government, legislatures, political parties) and how representativeness is measured.

Citizen-government congruence, due to its centrality in characterizing democratic governance in which citizens are supposedly ruled in accordance with their interests, so far has constituted the main agenda of congruence studies (Blais & Bodet, 2006; Budge & McDonald, 2007; J. D. Huber & Powell, 1994; M. Kim, 2009; Mayne & Hakhverdian, 2017; McDONALD et al., 2004; Powell, 2000, 2004).

Drawing predominantly on spatial approaches, the median voter theorem in particular, existing literature first and foremost studied the possible determinants of citizen-government incongruence: while some suggest that majoritarian systems hindered representation of citizen preferences at governmental level (Bingham Powell Jr & Vanberg, 2000; Budge & McDonald, 2007; J. D. Huber & Powell, 1994; McDONALD et al., 2004), others contended that PR systems do not necessarily yield more representative governments (Blais & Bodet, 2006; Ferland, 2016; Golder & Stramski, 2010).

Aside from the possible effects of electoral systems in ensuring or hampering better alignment between the citizenry on the one hand and the governments and legislatures on the other, the existing literature frequently problematize citizen-representative congruence with vis-à-vis citizen attitudes pertaining to democratic regimes, most leading of which is the individual and aggregate levels of satisfaction with democracy. In this regard, Aarts and Thomassen (2008) maintain that on average, citizens who perceive themselves to be better represented are more satisfied with the democratic regimes they reside in and complementing the abovementioned studies on the efffects of electoral systems on citizen-representative congruence, find that the citizens in the PR systems have higher levels of perceived representation. Moving beyond citizen perceptions, a series of studies reverberate the positive relationship between better citizen-government congruence and higher levels of satisfaction with democracy (M. Kim, 2009; Mayne & Hakhverdian, 2017; Stecker & Tausendpfund, 2016). One striking accomplishment of these studies is that in addition to presenting reality checks into the representative performances of liberal democratic regimes, they also establish a link between the realities of *citizen representation,* normatively deemed an essential pillar of democracies as pointed out

above, and citizen attitudes toward democratic procedures and institutions. In other words, *representativeness* as a founding claim of democratic regimes appears to be linked to citizen apprehensions of democratic satisfaction as a proxy for the "functioning of democracy" (Anderson and Guillory 1997, 70).

4.2 Party-voter congruence

Measuring the level of alignment between the citizenry and governments at broader level does not provide a complete assessment of representativeness in democratic party systems, however. Political parties as the primary agents of representation in democracies in this regard have been subject to a parallel line of inquiry, albeit with much less traction in the literature. Resonating with the partially normative quest of studies concerning citizen-government congruence, this strand invokes the so-called "Responsible Party Model" (APSA 1950; Thomassen 1994, 1999) which stipulates that in order to optimize citizen representation, political parties competing in a system should provide distinct and identifiable policies and accordingly, voters should be informed to cast their vote in line with their policy preferences, as well as reward or punish them based on these informational cues (Stokes & Miller, 1962). In this vein, Stokes and Miller (1963) pioneered a separate line of study in the citizen-representative congruence literature by studying the degree of alignment between the members of the Congress and their respective constituencies on a range of issues like welfare policies and civil rights in the US. Paralleling the scope of the research on citizen-government congruence fed by the semi-normative stipulations of the Responsible Party Model, however, studies on party-voter congruence for the most part revolve around the task of providing insights on the degree of alignment

between citizens and political parties at macro level rather than incorporating this macro-level variable as a predictor of wider political phenomena.

Since the seminal study of Miller and Stokes (1963), the responsible party model spawned a series of studies which are primarily concerned with the extent to which political parties are "responsible" in the overlap between their policies and the stances of citizens who vote for them. Given its partiall normative elements, most studies remained descriptive as a reality check into the level of party representativeness in liberal democracies, highlighting the varying degrees of party-voter congruence based on different policy spaces (Converse & Pierce, 2014; Esaiasson, 2017; Klingemann, 1998; Miller et al., 1994; Schmitt & Thomassen, 1999). One of the most remarkable in these studies is that while political parties and voters are fairly aligned on the traditional left-right continuum, political parties fare much worse in representing the policy preferences of voters regarding European integration and cultural matters, and immigration policies (Costello et al., 2012; Mattila & Raunio, 2006; Schmitt & Thomassen, 1999; Thomassen, 2012), resonating with the insight that political parties succeed in representing the public opinion on the issue dimensions that structure party competition in the long run, yet the issue agendas that cross-cut the conventional axes of political competition precipitate a less familiar field for the political parties to consider voter stances (Powell, 2004).

Moving beyond descriptive snapshots, several studies traced possible explanations for varying levels of party-voter congruence in comparative designs. In one of the early examples, Dalton (1985) suggest that PR systems and more polarized party systems had the advantage over others in minimizing the distance between political parties and voters on a palette of issues, yet underlying a similar understanding that congruence scores vary by the policy issue under study. Mattila

and Raunio (2006), drawing on data from the European Parliament elections, confirm the previously cited findings that levels of congruence vary by policy issues and European political parties are significantly less representative of their voter on the matters of European integration. However, he contends that PR systems do not perform better in ensuring congruence, corroborated by Belchior (2013). Overall, both studies support the previous findings (Costello et al., 2012; Miller et al., 1994; Schmitt & Thomassen, 1999; Thomassen, 2012) that while parties in Western democracies are well aligned with their voters on the traditional left-right division, perfect congruence is a far cry from reality when other issue agendas are taken into consideration. More recently, Dalton (2017) extensively studies the predictors of opinion congruence between voters and representatives in the European elections and although the findings do not suggest a direct relationship between electoral systems and party-voter congruence, higher levels of disproportionality and fewer numbers of effective parties are found to drive incongruence at macro-level.

Voter-level studies of party-voter for the most part espouse a general overview of representativeness and its repercussions. Lefkofridi, Giger, and Gallego (2014) operationalize party-voter congruence via the distance between a voter's self-placement on the left-right scale and the ideologically closest viable party option based on how she placed each political party on the same continuum, finding that higher congruence with the closest viable option she expressed boosted voter turnout. Adopting a "salience-based" approach among the Swiss electorate, Lefkofridi and Giger (2014) find that although mainstream parties show a higher degree of congruence with their voters, they are far less representative in their prioritization of certain policy issues over others to the advantage of niche parties in Switzerland. Congruence measurement through diverging or converging patterns of issue

prioritization among voters and political parties is used in a cross-national study of the effect of congruence on democratic satisfaction (Reher, 2015). Another study, which is one of the main departure points of our voter-level analyses in the previous chapters, is by Marchal and Watson (2022) on the ameliorative role of party-voter incongruence along several policy issues with respect to affective polarization which they dub as "the paradox of poor representation". However, all these studies employ party-voter congruence at voter-level and moreover, except for Marchal and Watson (2022) none of them measure congruence as the ideological and/or policy based distance between voters/partisan and political parties.

There are several points of interest to highlight in situating the studies on party-voter congruence in the broader context of citizen-representative congruence. First, most studies on citizen-representative congruence are geared toward representativeness at higher tiers at the expense of presenting a more fine-grained "dyadic" approach between voters and political parties (Lefkofridi, 2020). Although the majority of the previously cited literature on citizen-government literature does not bypass the significance in citizen representativeness in legislatures (Bingham Powell, 2009; Bingham Powell Jr & Vanberg, 2000; Blais & Bodet, 2006; McDONALD et al., 2004), they do not consider the variation between parties and their constituencies in their computations. Even when citizen-legislature congruence is considered a proxy for citizen representation by political parties and studied accordingly, measurement strategies by these studies rely on more aggregate spatial models such as the absolute distance between the policy preference of the median citizen and the median party in the legislature. Trailblazed by Golder and Stramski (2010), several studies measure citizen-legislative congruence through the shared probability functions of citizens and members of legislatures (Mayne &

Hakhverdian, 2017; Rosema et al., 2011) rather than simply relying on the median citizen and the median citizen member in the legislature, yet this approach does not change the oblivion toward political parties in studies on democratic representation either.

Just as importantly, studies on citizen-representative congruence regardless of the representative (party, government, legislature) differ in the data sources through which the measure congruence. Moving with the intuition that parties demonstrate a certain level of dispersion in the self-placements of their electorate (H. Kim & Fording, 1998), numerous studies relied solely on the CMP (Comparative Manifesto Project) to ascertain median citizen preferences as well as party ideological positions to measure congruence (Budge & McDonald, 2007; McDONALD et al., 2004), whereas some others use a multitude of sources including country-expert surveys and CSES data to ensure the validity of their findings (Bingham Powell, 2009; Bingham Powell Jr & Vanberg, 2000), and lastly, some research underscores the perception of representation and benefits of using the using the same metric in identifying voter and elite ideological positions/policy preferences (Mayne & Hakhverdian, 2017). As for party-voter congruence, most studies relied on separate voter and MP surveys (Belchior, 2010, 2013; Dalton, 1985, 2017; Miller et al., 1994; Schmitt & Thomassen, 1999; Thomassen, 2012), whereas only a tiny portion solely use voter surveys to tap into voter perceptions (Lefkofridi et al., 2014; Mattila & Raunio, 2006). In this thesis, as already employed in our voter-level analyses, both the voter perceptions and country experts' placements of political parties on the same metric, the left-right continuum, will be resorted to ensure compatibility.

As pointed out above, virtually the entirety of studies on citizen-representative congruence and party-voter congruence in particular presented either

descriptive overviews of how well do governments, legislatures, and political parties fare in ensuring citizen representation at varying levels, or to a lesser extent, traced the ostensible origins of the varying levels of congruence in different contexts. As much as these takes are remarkable in providing snapshots of how well democracies represent the citizenry from a normative standpoint, there is paucity of research on the implications of citizen-representative congruence, including that between political parties and voters. In other words, although we have a fair degree of insight concerning the degree of representativeness in different contexts and several possible factors explaining these variations, we hold surprisingly little knowledge on the social and political phenomena that could be explained by the varying degrees of citizen representation. One exception in this regard is the commonly debated linkage between citizen-government congruence and satisfaction with democracy as cited above (Aarts & Thomassen, 2008; M. Kim, 2009; Mayne & Hakhverdian, 2017; Reher, 2015; Stecker & Tausendpfund, 2016). For studies on party-voter congruence, the absence of congruence as a predictor is even more pressing. Only a handful of studies in the congruence literature incorporated party-voter linkages as a predictor of vote switching (Lefkofridi et al., 2014), dissatisfaction with democracy and the propensity to vote for anti-establishment parties (Bakker et al., 2018, 2020), and affective polarization levels (Marchal & Watson, 2022). Adding onto the lack of research on the implications of party-voter congruence is the total absence of country-level studies of party-voter congruence with its possible ramifications.

At this step, formulizing hypotheses on possible linkages between party-voter congruence and affective polarization with its in- and out-party components stands out as a crucial task. On the one hand, we might expect to observe direct ameliorative effects of increased incongruence on overall affective polarization scores through

more negative in-party evaluations and positive out-party evaluations as maintained in the previous chapter. On the other hand, as lower levels of citizen-representative congruence are associated with less democratic satisfaction (Aarts & Thomassen, 2008; M. Kim, 2009; Stecker & Tausendpfund, 2016) and lower levels of democratic satisfaction are associated with higher levels of affective polarization (Guedes-Neto, 2023), we might see a reverse relationship where party-voter incongruence is linked to less democratic satisfaction and hence more affective polarization.

Since there has been virtually academic study on a probable linkage between party-voter congruence, we will test the same hypotheses laid out in our voter-level empirical analyses in the previous chapters, which are:

H1: Higher levels of party-voter incongruence are linked to more negative in-party affective evaluations at country-election level.

H2: Higher levels of party-voter incongruence are linked to more positive out-party affective evaluations at country-election level.

H3: Higher levels of party-voter incongruence are linked to lower levels of affective polarization as the average distance between in-party evaluations and out-party evaluations at country-election level.

Before proceeding to our empirical analyses testing these hypothesis, a brief review of country-level studies on affective polarization will be introduced, some of will be crucial to build our models in the next chapter.

4.3 Affective polarization in comparative perspective

As elaborated in the literature review of the first chapter, copious studies on affective polarization originate from the US context where the rising visibility of partisan polarization induced researchers to delve into the origins and correlates of fear and loathing along partisan lines. However, comparative research has not sluggish to contend that the overall levels of affective polarization in the US are not unprecedented or unmatched compared to party systems elsewhere in the world (Gidron et al., 2020; Reiljan, 2020). In this regard, a proliferating comparative agenda has evolved, aiming to explain cross-country variations in affective polarization.

In line with the theoretical debates on whether ideological polarization assumes the main role in driving affective polarization, several studies find that mass ideological polarization is linked to mass trends of affective polarization, yet these two constitute distinct phenomena in which the former only partially predicts the latter (Boxell et al., 2020; Gidron et al., 2020; Reiljan, 2020). Although several studies pointed out to the link between mass partisanship and heightened party polarization (Hetherington, 2001; Lauka et al., 2018; Lupu, 2015) and party evaluations (Çakır, 2020), a remarkable dividing line between voter-level studies and cross-national comparative studies on affective polarization has been the absence of debates on mass partisanship as an integral part of forming affective evaluations, althougth the former elevates partisan affiliations as one of the most, if not the most, crucial factors in explaining affective polarization.

On the other hand, adopting a macro-scale comparative approach has contributed to the expansion of research strategies through incorporating macroeconomic variables of Gini inequality index and unemployment rates, which

are found to drive affective polarization across countries (Boxell et al., 2020; Gidron et al., 2020). Replicating the dyadic models applied in the bipolar US party systems, Gidron and others (2022) construct party dyads among multiparty systems and find that in addition to elite ideological polarization, partisans of coalition partners develop more sympathy toward each other while similarly, collateral opposition status – simply parties outside government compositions – drive positive evaluations. Where collective party-voter incongruence as a potential rift between political parties and partisan groups, however, have not been subject to empirical studies as a predictor, let alone its possible links with affective ties to parties of identification and other parties in the system. To assess if an ameliorative effect of party-voter incongruence is underway at country level, the next section of this chapter will subject the abovementioned hypotheses to empirical test.

CHAPTER 5

COUNTRY-LEVEL ANALYSES ON PARTY-VOTER CONGRUENCE AND AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION

In this chapter, the hypothesized relationship between party-voter congruence on the one hand our affect measures, namely the affective polarization levels, in-party evaluations and out-party evaluations on the other will be tested. Building on the debates on affective polarizaiton provided in the second and third chapters, as well as the existing literature on party-voter congruence presented in the previous chapter, three sets of OLS and three sets of fixed-effects models will be introduced. Drawing on the same country-election sample employed in voter-level analyses which covers 95 elections in 27 democracies, empirical analyses in this chapter suggest that there is a more complex interplay between party-voter congruence and affective polarization with its in- and out-party components. Using Achen's (1978) formulae, when party-voter congruence is measured by partisans' average *perceived* squared distance from the political parties they identify with, the growing distance between political parties and partisans appears to drive affective polarization and more negative out-party evaluations. However, when party-voter congruence is measured by the average squared distance between political parties and their partisans relative to the variance of partisan ideological self-placements based on the party placements of political parties as previously employed in our voter-level analyses, the growing ideological distance between political parties and partisans seem to curb affective polarization and yield more positive out-party evaluations.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. First, specifities of the research design with respect to variable operationalization and modelling strategies will be laid out. Second, the three main hypotheses will be tested with robust OLS and fixed-effects models in our sample. In the last analysis, main findings of our empirical analyses will be discussed in light of the existing literature and the possible implications it might entail for upcoming research.

5.1 Data and research design

In this section, I will lay out the details for the variable operationalization and empirical strategies with which I run and present my models. As for the voter-level models I presented in the previous chapter, I will use the Integrated Module of the CSES (Comparative Study of Electoral Systems) to extract voter data on in- and out-party thermometer scores, democratic satisfaction, party left-right placements by voters and parties, as well as voter self-placements on the same continuum. For a detailed description of the CSES database, please visit the section 2.2. in the previous chapter. Most control variables to be employed in our analyses are taken from Gidron and others' (2020) models, which predict affective polarization trends, with respect to elite ideological polarization based on the party manifesto codings within the CMP (Comparative Manifesto Project) database, as well as a set of macroeconomic controls and lastly, electoral system proportionality which has been shown to drive positive evaluations for both the parties of identification and out-parties.

Because this chapter gears toward providing country-level explanations for the variation in affective polarization scores across multiple democracies, several variables that are also included in voter-level models are restructured to fit comparative analysis, which will be explicated in detail below. As for the structure of

regression models I will employ in this chapter, both conventional OLS models clustered on countries and fixed-effect models to account for within-country variations will be used in line with Gidron et al. (2020), which provide the most elaborate empirical strategy to study affective polarization in comparative perspective. Findings of this study will also provide us with several control variables in addition to our main explanatory variable, that is party-voter congruence.

5.1.1 Dependent variables

Three main dependent variables in the previous chapter, namely affective polarization scores, in-party affective evaluations, and out-party affective evaluations, will be replicated as country-level scores as the hypotheses under test remain the same. Again, as previously done in voter-level models, these scores are operationalized with thermometer scores assigned by voters to all political parties in the system. For a discussion on the validity and prevalence of thermometer scores as proxies for affect, please revisit the section 2.2.1 in the first chapter.

Following Reiljan (2020) and Gidron, Adams, and Horne (2020), affective polarization scores are calculated for each partisan group in a party system as the weighted average distance between the thermometer scores assigned to the identified party and those assigned to all other parties in the system. This average score is initially weighted by the vote share of each political party except the one whose partisan groups is calculated, and this total score is again weighted by the vote share of the partisan group under study in the entire electorate. To put more simply, the API (Affective Polarization Index) score for Party A is calculated as

$$\left[\sum_{p=i}^{Z} \frac{(\overline{inparty} - \ thermometer_i) * v_i}{(v_{total} - v_A)}\right] * v_A$$

where *i* stands for the out-party in a total number of Z + 1 parties in the system – including Party A – and *v* stands for the vote share of parties.

In a similar vein, average in-party affective evaluations are calculated for each party group, weighted by their vote share in the electorate. That is:

$$\sum_{p=i}^{Z} \frac{\overline{inparty} * v_p}{v_{total}}$$

As for out-party evaluations, out-party evaluations of each partisan toward each party in the system is calculated, first weighted by the vote share of each out-party by its vote share in the electorate excluding the identified party and second, the total score is weighted by the vote share of the selected partisan group. This formulization can be followed as

$$\left[\sum_{p=i}^{Z} \frac{(\ thermometer_i) * v_i}{(v_{total} - v_A)}\right] * v_A$$

where *i* stands for the out-party in a total number of Z + 1 parties in the system – including Party A – and *v* stands for the vote share of parties.

5.1.2 Independent variables

Party-voter congruence

Like the strategy we employed in the previous chapter, country-level scores of party-voter congruence will be calculated drawing on two sources: voter perceptions and country-expert placements. However, in contrast with our simple measures of voter-level congruence in the previous chapter, operationalizing party-voter congruence at country-level necessitates specific formulae based on party-voter dyads for each political party in the system. In this analysis, these dyads are constructed in accordance with Achen's (1978) methodology. Unlike the spatial strategies employed by most studies of citizen-representative congruence based on the median voter, he operationalizes party-voter congruence with three measures: *proximity*, *centrism*, and *responsiveness*. First measure, *proximity*, taps into a simple logic, namely the mean squared distance of each voter from the party position. *Centrism*, on the other hand, heeds the variance of voters with respect to the *proximity* measure by subtracting the former from the latter, thus giving us a proxy of how farther the voter groups are clustered from the party position. In other words, it roughly estimates the degree of congruence considering the voter dispersion. Lastly, the *responsiveness* measure is constructed as the simple bivariate regression coefficient between voter self-placements and the party position, though given the occasionally small sample size for several political parties in the sample, only the first two measures will be employed in the analysis.

In formulae, the *proximity* measure for the party-voter dyad of Party A can be simply shown as

$$\frac{1}{n_A}\sum_{i=1}^{n_A}(selfplacement_i - partyposition_A)^2$$

while the *centrism* measure would be

$$proximity - var_A$$

where var_A stands for the variance of voter self-placement on the left-right scale, which is

$$\frac{1}{n_A - 1}\sum\left(selfplacement_i - \overline{selfplacement}\right)^2$$

Note that higher scores of both proximity and centrism indicate less correspondence between political parties and voters, thus higher levels of party-voter incongruence on par with the literature employing these two measures (e.g., Achen, 1978; Dalton, 1985, 2017).

As pointed out above and applied in the previous chapter, we aim to separate voter perceptions and expert opinion in extracting the positions of political parties while measuring congruence. To get a rough estimate of perceived ideological positions of political parties, the average left-right placement assigned to each political party by their partisans are used. To measure congruence with expert opinions, the left-right scores assigned to each political party by the country experts

in the CSES survey are employed. In line with the dependent variable measurement at country level, proximity and centrism scores with voter perceptions and expert placements are weighted by political parties' vote shares in a given election cycle.

Ideological polarization

Three alternative measures to account for elite-level ideological polarization in each election observation are derived from Gidron and others' (2020) modelling strategy. First variable with which to control for elite ideological polarization is the overall left-right polarization based on the RILE measure in the CMP (Comparative Manifesto Project) database[2]. Paralleling Dalton (2008) which is used in the previous chapter to measure party polarization on left-right placements, elite level left-right polarization is measured as the dispersion of RILE scores assigned to each political party in an election cycle weighted by their vote share.

Again, following Gidron and others (2020), elite-level cultural and economic polarization measures are included in the analysis as two separate predictors to account for ideological polarization in a party system. To measure cultural polarization, seven CMP parameters regarding multiculturalism, traditional morality, patriotism are combined to assess the degree of left-right tone of a political party pertaining to cultural issues. Similarly, a composite economic left-right variable is constructed based on to what extent party manifestos endorse protectionist policies, labor rights, market regulations, Keynesian agendas, and so forth. The complete list of parameters included in the cultural and economic left-right variables is in the Appendix section for further reading.

[2] RILE scores in the CMP database are constructed in an additive fashion comprising numerous parameters included in the dataset. For the complete list of parameters included in RILE scores, see The Manifesto Project Dataset - Codebook. Manifesto Project (MRG / CMP / MARPOR). Version 2023a.

Satisfaction with democracy

In the previous chapter, satisfaction with democracy is incorporated to voter-level models as a control variable in line with Wagner (2021) who suggests a significant link between democratic satisfaction and affective polarization in his cross-national study. Building on the previously discussed literature on the relationship between democratic satisfaction on the one hand and partisanship (Ridge, 2022), ideological polarization (Ezrow & Xezonakis, 2011; Russo et al., 2023), perceptions of representation (Aarts & Thomassen, 2008), and voter-representative congruence (M. Kim, 2009; Mayne & Hakhverdian, 2017; Stecker & Tausendpfund, 2016) on the other, satisfaction with democracy is incorporated as a control variable in country-level analyses of party-voter congruence and affective polarization. As elaborated in the first chapter, CSES (Comparative Study of Electoral Systems) include satisfaction with democracy batteries to which respondents can respond with answers "very satisfied", "fairly satisfied", "not very satisfied", and "not satisfied at all". To tap into democratic satisfaction at macro level, percentage of respondents who expressed complete or fair satisfaction are coded and added to the analyses.

Unemployment rate

There are several studies highlighting the adverse effects of severe economic circumstances on political trust and satisfaction with democracy (Anderson & Guillory, 1997; Kornberg & Clarke, 1994; Weatherford, 1984), which in turn might be linked to rising levels of affective polarization. Building on this literature and Gidron and others' (2020) findings, unemployment level is added to our models as a macroeconomic control variable. Although Gidron' study incorporates the Gini coefficient as a second control and indeed income inequality has been shown to drive

polarization (Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018; McCoy & Somer, 2019), many observations in the country-election sample of this study lacks complete Gini scores for several years. Therefore, Gini index is excluded from the analysis and only the unemployment rates will be used as there is no paucity of data in this regard.

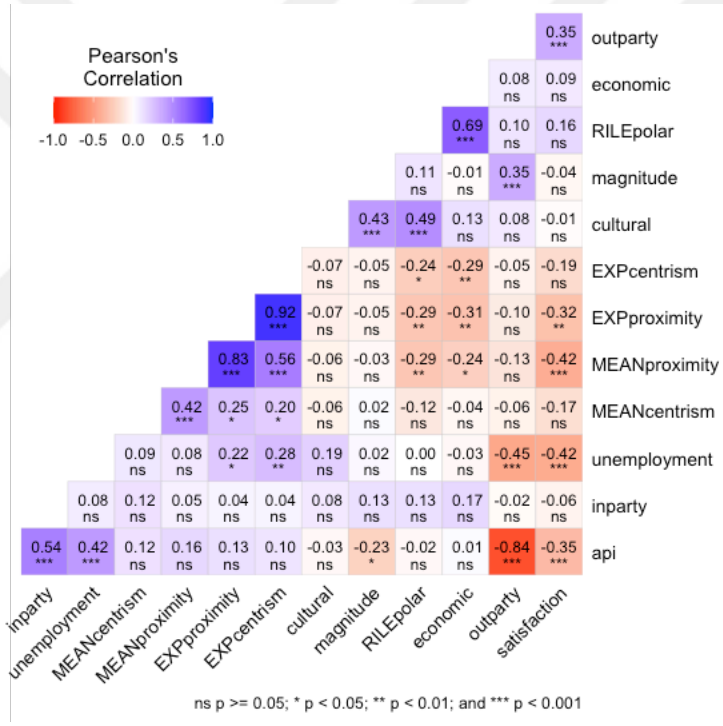
Electoral institutions

Proportionality of electoral systems is situated at the intersection of our main dependent and independent variables, namely affective polarization and party representativeness. For the former, as Lijphart (2010 [2017]) posited, more proportional electoral systems are associated with "kinder" and "gentler" politics as party competition and government formation procedures revolve around coalition-making and consensus building, whereas majoritarian electoral systems are geared toward a winner-takes it all pattern where a plurality of vote shares is often enough to form single-party governments, something McCoy and Somer (2019) argue to pave the way for extreme levels of societal divisions and polarization where a slim majority or plurality of votes lead to disproportionality, and lesser representation for most citizens. Based on this intuition, Gidron and others' (2020) find that more proportional electoral systems are linked to more positive out-party evaluations as well as higher levels of in-party positive affect.

From a congruence perspective, as elucidated above in the literature review, more proportional systems have been suggested to demonstrate higher levels of citizen-representative congruence in legislatures and governments (Bingham Powell Jr & Vanberg, 2000; Budge & McDonald, 2007; J. D. Huber & Powell, 1994; McDONALD et al., 2004). In the literature on democratic satisfaction, it has also been frequently suggested that the "winner" status of citizens render them more

satisfied with democracy as they perceive themselves to be represented at government level (Anderson & Guillory, 1997; Blais & Bodet, 2006; M. Kim, 2009; Kornberg & Clarke, 1994). For PR systems are often characterized by coalition governments with multiple parties, thus a wider group of *winners*, controlling for possible effects of proportionality seems prudent. To test for possible multicollinearity issues in the upcoming models, a pairwise correlation matrix is presented below.

Table 5. Pairwise correlation matrix



Note: Higher proximity and centrism scores denote higher party-voter incongruence.

There are several points to be made on our predictors moving from the pairwise correlation results where MEAN- and EXP- prefixes stand for *perceived* (based on mean voter placements of political parties) and expert opinion-based measures, respectively. First, all four measures of party-voter congruence seem to be correlated to a significant extent and the Pearson-r statistics between perceived

proximity congruence (MEANprox) and congruence based on experts' party placements look particularly strong with the highest level of significance and coefficient magnitude. Second, democratic satisfaction rates at country level appear to be significantly linked to both measures of proximity congruence between parties and voters, lending support to findings that indeed lesser degrees of voter representation are linked to lower levels of satisfaction with democracy (Aarts & Thomassen, 2008; M. Kim, 2009; Mayne & Hakhverdian, 2017; Stecker & Tausendpfund, 2016). This finding is striking as none of the cited research focusing on the relationship between congruence and democratic satisfaction specifies party-voter linkages in their operationalization. Third, none of our congruence measures display a significant link to our affective measures of polarization, in-party evaluations, and out-party evaluations. Empirical analyses using standard OLS and fixed-effect models in the proceeding section will further elaborate on the hypothesized link between party-voter congruence on the one hand and our three affective measures on the other.

5.2 Empirical analyses and findings

Three tables below present the average scores in the sample for API (Affective Polarization Index) as well as in-party evaluations and out-party evaluations by country. In our sample, Turkey makes the country with the highest average affective polarization score around 7.2 and the country with the lowest average score in out-party affective evaluations, approximately 1.6. Given that all three outcome variables of affect can take the minimum value of 0 and a maximum of 10 based on a thermometer scale, these results suggest that on average, respondents from Turkey score the parties with which they identify 7.2 points higher than they score other

parties in the country, to which they assign a strikingly low 1.6 out of 10. Regarding the second component of affective polarization, in-party evaluations, Turkey ranks only the second after Hungary, where respondents assign an average 8.87 out of 10. On the other side of the spectrum, The Netherlands appears as the country with the highest average score (4.98 out of 10) for out-party affective evaluations that the respondents assign to political parties outside their own and similarly, it ranks the lowest in affective polarization index with a mere 2.7 out of 10.

The set of figures below present the average proximity and centrism congruence scores by country in our sample, where congruence scores based on expert placements of political parties are shown with red and black dots in the first and second figure, respectively, and higher scores in both measures signal less correspondence between political parties and voters. As evident from the pairwise correlation matrix presented above and these figures, *proximity* and *centrism* scores, irrespective of the measurement strategy employed, do not seem to align neatly with each other. Recalling that proximity measures tap into the average ideological distance of voters from their parties and centrism scores reflect proximity scores relative to the variance of voter-self placement, this differential picture suggests that there exist numerous party systems where voters place themselves far from their political parties, yet parties in some of these systems do a better job in minimizing this distance relative to the variation of ideological self-placements of their voters in an "efficient" way (Achen 1978, 487- 488). Israeli party system, for instance, seems to consist of political parties whose average closeness to its partisans seems meager though its degree of congruence appears to be the highest when the within-constituency variation is taken into consideration. Political parties in Sweden, however, seem well-aligned with their voters based on the average distance between

the two notwithstanding its partial success in their distance from the mean citizen where the distance could be minimized efficiently.

Lastly, Mexico and South Africa disproportionately high low levels of party representativeness for all four measures of congruence. This pronounced distinction might be partially associated with the pattern that the value items characterizing the left-right divide in the literature reflect the sites of cooperation and contestation in more established democracies (traditional conservatism – individual liberalism, socialism – liberalism, materialism – post-materialism) (Freire & Kivistik, 2013), or the sheer possibility that voters in new democracies are yet to be socialized in partisan identities as well as ideological labels for themselves and political parties with distinct programs which were mostly absent in authoritarian contexts (Freire, 2006; Kitschelt, 1999). Because this study does not concern the driving factors of party-voter incongruence but rather explores its implications on affective evaluations, reasons behind these countries' outlier status in the sample will not be explored.

Our first set of OLS models from 1 to 8 that predict affective polarization, clustered by countries, are presented below. In this table, while models 1-4 use the elite left-right polarization (RILE) as ideological polarization controls, the remaining half incorporate our separate elite cultural and elite economic polarization variables along with democratic satisfaction, unemployment level, logged average district magnitude and finally, our primary explanatory predictors, party-voter congruence, with its four measures. Our standard OLS results indicate that only the unemployment levels are associated with higher levels of affective polarization when 95 country-election units in the sample are taken as individual observations without

accounting for fixed-effects. Just as importantly, we are yet to see how these variables are linked to in- and out-party evaluations separately.

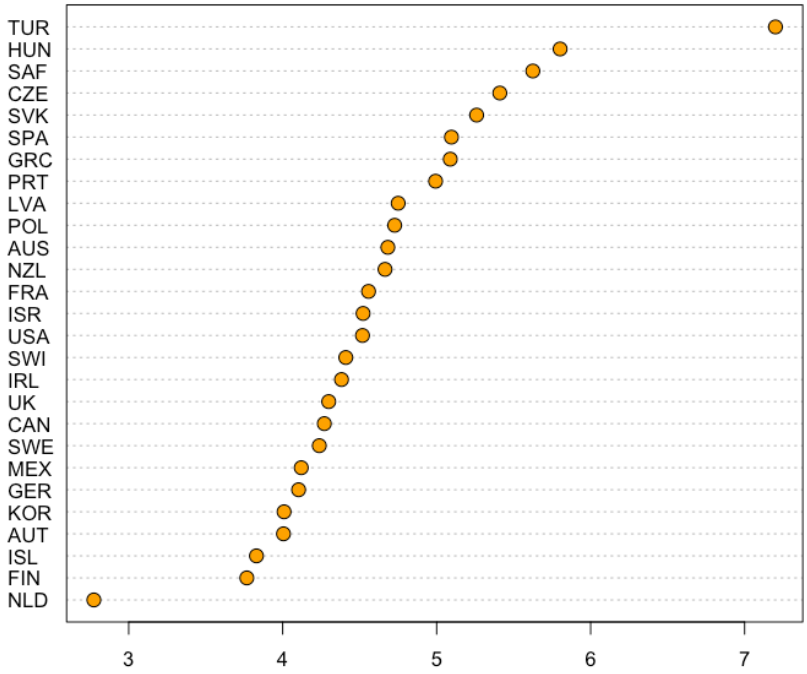


Figure 1. Average Affective Polarization Index (API) scores by country

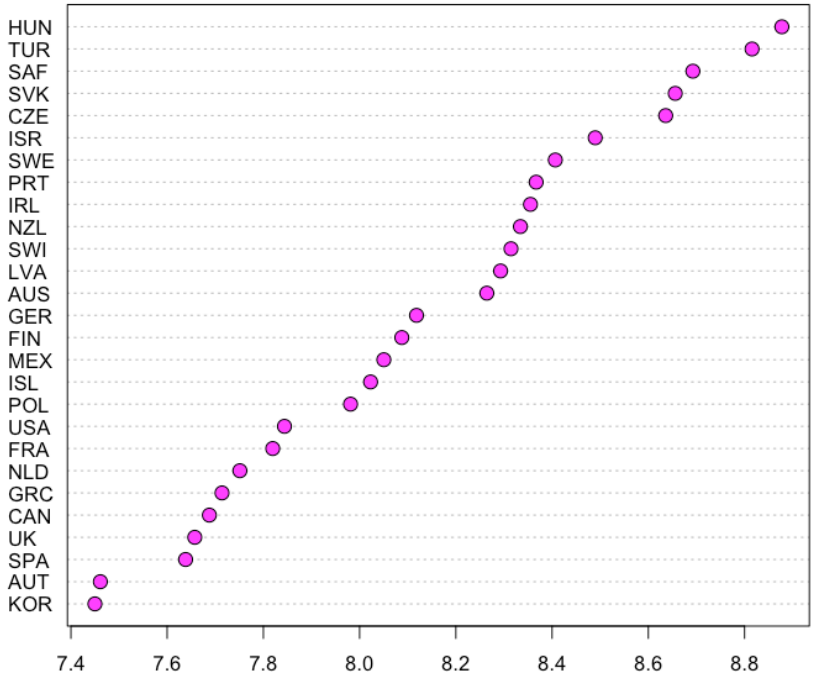


Figure 2. Average in-party thermometer scores by country

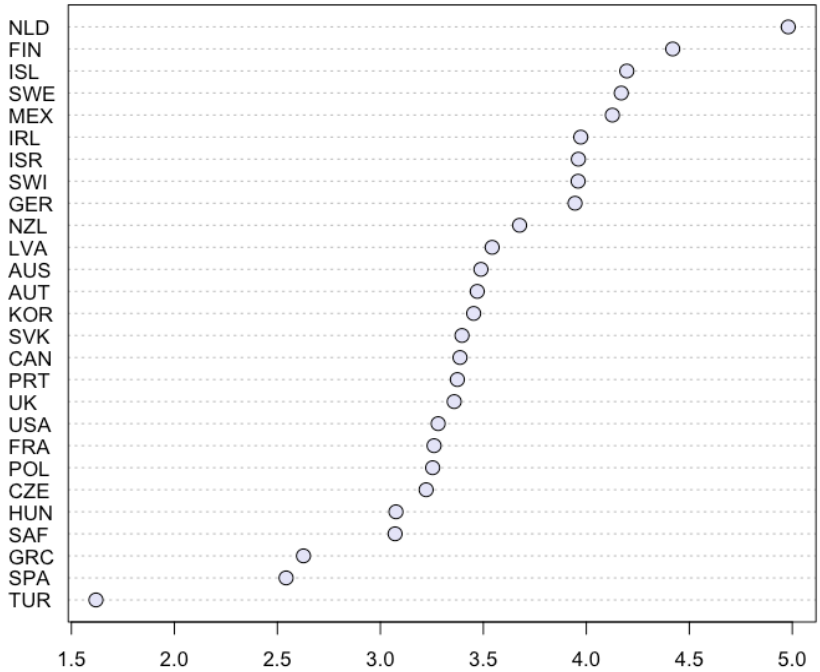


Figure 3. Average out-party thermometer scores by country

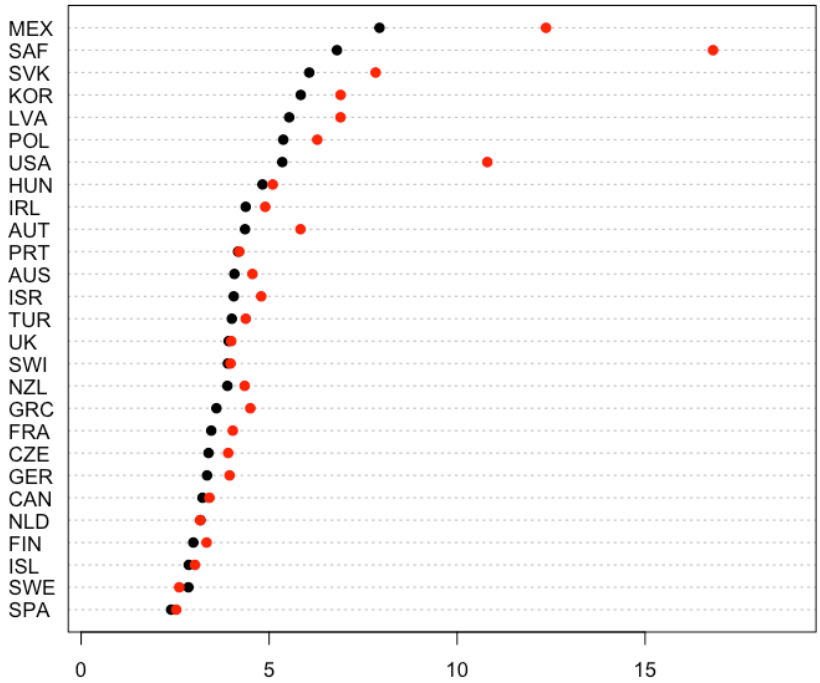


Figure 4. Average proximity scores by country

Note: Black dots indicate proximity scores based on voter placements while red dots indicate proximity scores based on expert placements of political parties. Higher scores denote higher incongruence.

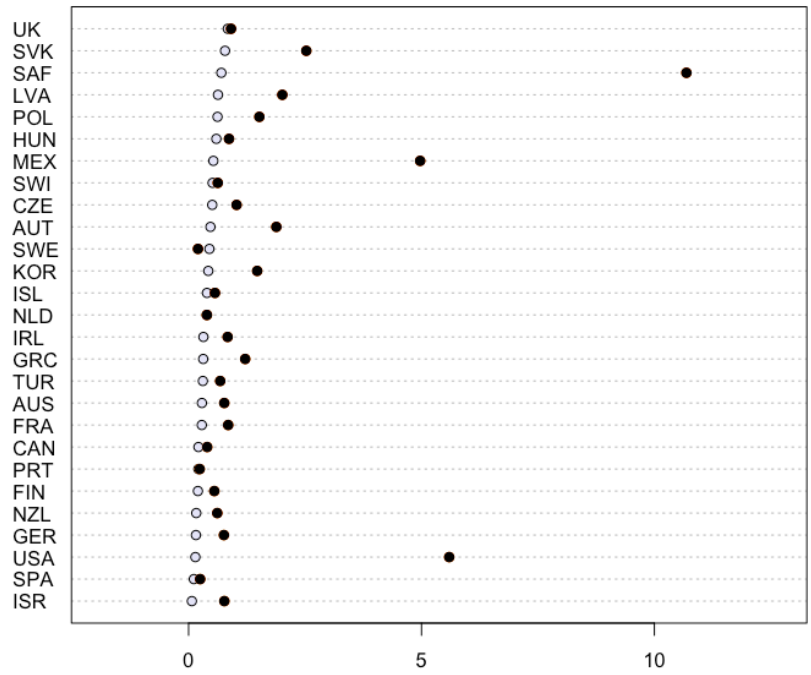


Figure 5. Average centrism scores by country

Note: Grey dots indicate centrism scores based on voter placements while black dots indicate centrism scores based on expert placements of political parties. Higher scores denote higher incongruence.

Our second set of models controlling for fixed-effects from 1 to 8 predict the within-country variation in affective polarization scores with our baseline predictors. Since the F-statistics for the first four models which include elite left-right polarization (RILE) as the proxy for ideological polarization do not pass the threshold of significance, our main focus will be the models 4-8 which present predictions for affective polarization with elite level cultural and economic polarization in addition to our main explanatory variable, party-voter congruence, with its four measures. In contrast with the OLS models, fixed-effects estimations predict that elite cultural polarization is significantly linked to higher levels of affective polarization, whereas unemployment, which stand out as the sole significant predictor of affective polarization in our OLS models, appears

insignificant. Party-voter congruence, on the other hand, seem to be in a slim and contradictory linkage with affective polarization scores: on the one hand, higher levels of perceived proximity incongruence (*MEANproximity*) is predicted to drive affective polarization whereas higher levels of expert placement-based centrism congruence (*EXPcentrism*) is expected to ameliorate polarization, while the significance levels of both predictors fail to be below $p < 0.05$. Democratic satisfaction as the last control variable remains insignificant with respect to within-country variations of affective polarization. To put differently, although the varying levels of unemployment, democratic satisfaction, and elite economic polarization in a country are not associated with ups and downs in the overall levels of affective polarization, higher degrees of party polarization on cultural matters in a country seems to drive affective polarization. Lastly, in countries where party representativeness, measured by perceived proximity scores, decline we observe a counterintuitive rise in affective polarization yet a similar decline in party representativeness measured by centrism based on expert placements of political parties seems to ameliorate affective polarization, while both linkages have weak significance values.

Table 8 below presents the results for the OLS models predicting out-party evaluations clustered at country level, controlling for elite ideological polarization with respect to overall left-right scores in the first four models and elite cultural as well as elite economic polarization in the other half. The results are quite similar to those presented in Table 6. neither elite ideological polarization nor democratic satisfaction seem to be significantly associated with overall levels of out-party affective evaluations in our sample without accounting for within-country effects. Paralleling our findings on affective polarization using OLS models, again, none of

the four congruence measures indicate a statistically significant relationship that predicts affective evaluations toward other parties.

Table 6. OLS Estimates for API (Affective Polarization Index) Scores

	Dependent variable:							
	API							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
RILEpolar	0.004	0.004	0.002	0.002				
	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.014)				
cultural					−0.012	−0.011	−0.012	−0.013
					(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.020)
economic					0.013	0.011	0.010	0.009
					(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.022)
magnitude	−0.070	−0.075	−0.074	−0.075	−0.061	−0.067	−0.065	−0.066
	(0.091)	(0.092)	(0.092)	(0.093)	(0.097)	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.099)
unemployment	0.056***	0.055***	0.056***	0.058***	0.058***	0.057***	0.058***	0.059***
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.021)
satisfaction	−0.835	−0.858	−0.925	−0.906	−0.796	−0.839	−0.898	−0.888
	(0.681)	(0.597)	(0.622)	(0.596)	(0.672)	(0.596)	(0.621)	(0.594)
MEANproximity	0.017				0.021			
	(0.060)				(0.057)			
MEANcentrism		0.182				0.162		
		(0.218)				(0.212)		
EXPproximity			−0.007				−0.005	
			(0.029)				(0.029)	
EXPcentrism				−0.019				−0.017
				(0.042)				(0.042)
Constant	4.523***	4.553***	4.713***	4.688***	4.482***	4.554***	4.683***	4.677***
	(0.828)	(0.589)	(0.675)	(0.582)	(0.803)	(0.594)	(0.685)	(0.592)
Observations	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95
R^2	0.233	0.236	0.232	0.234	0.239	0.241	0.238	0.239
Adjusted R^2	0.189	0.193	0.189	0.191	0.187	0.190	0.186	0.188
Residual Std. Error	0.702 (df = 89)	0.700 (df = 89)	0.702 (df = 89)	0.701 (df = 89)	0.703 (df = 88)	0.702 (df = 88)	0.703 (df = 88)	0.702 (df = 88)
Note:								*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: Higher proximity and centrism scores denote higher levels of party-voter incongruence.

Table 7. Fixed-Effects Estimates for API (Affective Polarization Index) Scores

	Dependent variable:							
	API							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
RILEpolar	0.014	0.015	0.015	0.014				
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)				
cultural					0.036**	0.034**	0.037**	0.040**
					(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)
economic					0.018	0.019	0.017	0.013
					(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.013)
unemployment	0.021	0.019	0.022	0.024	0.010	0.008	0.011	0.013
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)
satisfaction	0.048	−0.008	0.025	0.048	−0.072	−0.112	−0.110	−0.119
	(0.584)	(0.588)	(0.596)	(0.586)	(0.577)	(0.583)	(0.590)	(0.577)
MEANproximity	0.077*				0.076*			
	(0.046)				(0.044)			
MEANcentrism		0.223				0.194		
		(0.163)				(0.160)		
EXPproximity			−0.011				−0.013	
			(0.033)				(0.032)	
EXPcentrism				−0.059				−0.066*
				(0.039)				(0.039)
Observations	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95
R^2	0.112	0.099	0.074	0.104	0.175	0.156	0.139	0.175
Adjusted R^2	−0.304	−0.323	−0.360	−0.315	−0.230	−0.259	−0.285	−0.231
F Statistic	2.020 (df = 4; 64)	1.758 (df = 4; 64)	1.284 (df = 4; 64)	1.865 (df = 4; 64)	2.681** (df = 5; 63)	2.334* (df = 5; 63)	2.032* (df = 5; 63)	2.673** (df = 5; 63)
Note:								*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: Higher proximity and centrism scores denote higher levels of party-voter incongruence.

Table 8. OLS Estimates for Out-Party Affective Evaluations

	Dependent variable:							
	Out-Party Evaluations							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
RILEpolar	0.003	0.002	0.006	0.006				
	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)				
cultural					0.007	0.007	0.007	0.009
					(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.014)
economic					0.002	0.001	0.006	0.007
					(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.015)
unemployment	−0.059***	−0.060***	−0.063***	−0.066***	−0.060***	−0.060***	−0.063***	−0.066***
	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.017)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.017)
magnitude	0.154***	0.152***	0.159***	0.159***	0.148**	0.147**	0.154**	0.152**
	(0.054)	(0.053)	(0.054)	(0.054)	(0.059)	(0.059)	(0.059)	(0.059)
satisfaction	0.706	0.623	0.743	0.653	0.706	0.628	0.758	0.667
	(0.544)	(0.545)	(0.475)	(0.493)	(0.553)	(0.548)	(0.477)	(0.488)
MEANproximity	0.020				0.018			
	(0.048)				(0.047)			
MEANcentrism		−0.043				−0.039		
		(0.203)				(0.198)		
EXPproximity			0.029				0.029	
			(0.027)				(0.028)	
EXPcentrism				0.051				0.052
				(0.044)				(0.045)
Constant	3.295***	3.469***	3.191***	3.348***	3.314***	3.468***	3.187***	3.335***
	(0.646)	(0.533)	(0.450)	(0.416)	(0.659)	(0.536)	(0.478)	(0.428)
Observations	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95
R^2	0.357	0.355	0.370	0.377	0.357	0.356	0.371	0.379
Adjusted R^2	0.321	0.319	0.335	0.342	0.314	0.312	0.328	0.336
Residual Std. Error	0.549 (df = 89)	0.550 (df = 89)	0.544 (df = 89)	0.541 (df = 89)	0.552 (df = 88)	0.553 (df = 88)	0.546 (df = 88)	0.543 (df = 88)
F Statistic	9.870*** (df = 5; 89)	9.812*** (df = 5; 89)	10.468*** (df = 5; 89)	10.789*** (df = 5; 89)	8.155*** (df = 6; 88)	8.119*** (df = 6; 88)	8.644*** (df = 6; 88)	8.940*** (df = 6; 88)
Note:								*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: Higher proximity and centrism scores denote higher levels of party-voter incongruence.

Table 9. Fixed-Effects Estimates for Out-Party Affective Evaluations

	Dependent variable:							
	Out-Party Evaluations							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
RILEpolar	−0.002	−0.004	−0.004	−0.001				
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)				
cultural					−0.026*	−0.028*	−0.029*	−0.032**
					(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.015)
economic					−0.014	−0.016	−0.017	−0.011
					(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.012)
unemployment	−0.025	−0.023	−0.024	−0.028	−0.015	−0.013	−0.013	−0.017
	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)
satisfaction	0.300	0.379	0.367	0.294	0.403	0.478	0.473	0.447
	(0.555)	(0.592)	(0.594)	(0.580)	(0.549)	(0.584)	(0.585)	(0.571)
MEANproximity	−0.129***				−0.121***			
	(0.043)				(0.042)			
MEANcentrism		−0.108				−0.074		
		(0.157)				(0.153)		
EXPproximity			−0.008				−0.010	
			(0.031)				(0.030)	
EXPcentrism				0.065*				0.063*
				(0.037)				(0.036)
Observations	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95
R^2	0.207	0.098	0.092	0.136	0.270	0.172	0.170	0.209
Adjusted R^2	−0.242	−0.413	−0.423	−0.353	−0.163	−0.319	−0.322	−0.260
F Statistic	3.922*** (df = 4; 60)	1.627 (df = 4; 60)	1.518 (df = 4; 60)	2.363* (df = 4; 60)	4.366*** (df = 5; 59)	2.450** (df = 5; 59)	2.419** (df = 5; 59)	3.115** (df = 5; 59)
Note:								*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: Higher proximity and centrism scores denote higher levels of party-voter incongruence.

Only the unemployment rate, which is seen to drive affective polarization, and logged district magnitude do predict out-party evaluations significantly: voters in

countries with higher unemployment rates develop more negative evaluations toward their counterparts, whereas those in countries with more proportional electoral systems appear to be less affectively polarized, underscoring Lijphart's (2010) propositions that PR systems yield "kinder" and "gentler" politics geared towards consensus making and coalition building and corroborating Gidron and others' (2020) findings regarding the ameliorative effects of PR systems on affective polarization.

Our fixed-effects models predicting out-party evaluations with the same varaible set, however, present different results. Complementing the fixed-effects models on affective polarization scores, perceived party-voter congruence seems to be in a positive relationship with out-party evaluations controlled for ideological polarization, democratic satisfaction, and unemployment rates: one-unit increase in perceived incongruence (*MEANproximity*) is estimated to yield a drop of 0.120 units in out-party evaluations. Similarly, higher centrism scores based on expert placements (*EXPcentrism*) are estimated to yield more positive affective evaluations toward other political parties. Taken together with its similar effects on affective polarization, these results necessitate an explanation as to how lesser party-voter congruence is linked to significantly more negative out-party evaluations and higher levels of affective polarization within countries. Before addressing this main puzzle, standard OLS models, clustered by countries, and fixed-effects models will be replicated with in-party evaluations as the outcome variable.

Table 10 below presents the results for the replicated OLS models that predict in-party evaluations with robust standard errors clustered at country level. Evidently, no predictor included in our models can significantly predict in-party affective evaluations, including our four main measures of party-voter congruence. In sharp

contrast with our previous findings on out-party evaluations and in direct refutal of Gidron and others' (2020) findings, we indeed do not observe any meaningful association between more proportional electoral systems and in-party affective evaluations. Similarly, although Gidron and others underscored the deleterious link between unemployment on the one hand and more negative in- and out-party evaluations on the other – the latter confirmed by our previous OLS model predicting out-party affect – our data does not support this thesis. To see whether these variables remain devoid of statistical significance in explaning the trends of in-party affect *within* countries in our sample, the model is replicated with country-fixed effects, presented in Table 11 below.

The results for our fixed-effects estimations mostly resonate with the previous absence of significant linkages between our set of variables and in-party affective evaluations. Virtually all predictors stand out insignificant except democratic satisfaction, though the level of significance fails to pass the $p < 0.05$ threshold and more importantly, none of the 8 models presented have statistically significant F-statistics, making it impossible to infer results drawing on our data. In conclusion, based on both the OLS and fixed-effects models, we cannot come up with a sound prediction for in-party affective evaluations.

Table 10. OLS Estimates for In-Party Affective Evaluations

	Dependent variable:							
	In-Party							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
RILEpolar	0.008	0.007	0.008	0.008				
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)				
cultural					−0.005	−0.003	−0.004	−0.004
					(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)
economic					0.016	0.014	0.017	0.016
					(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.013)
unemployment	−0.001	−0.001	−0.003	−0.004	0.001	−0.0003	−0.002	−0.003
	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.015)
magnitude	0.080	0.074	0.080	0.079	0.083	0.076	0.083	0.081
	(0.051)	(0.052)	(0.051)	(0.052)	(0.054)	(0.055)	(0.054)	(0.054)
satisfaction	−0.019	−0.111	−0.088	−0.137	0.020	−0.087	−0.049	−0.107
	(0.428)	(0.387)	(0.409)	(0.394)	(0.424)	(0.390)	(0.406)	(0.392)
MEANproximity	0.035				0.036			
	(0.035)				(0.034)			
MEANcentrism		0.152				0.137		
		(0.154)				(0.149)		
EXPproximity			0.015				0.017	
			(0.017)				(0.016)	
EXPcentrism				0.018				0.022
				(0.024)				(0.024)
Constant	7.732***	7.906***	7.859***	7.953***	7.704***	7.900***	7.819***	7.926***
	(0.472)	(0.353)	(0.416)	(0.367)	(0.444)	(0.346)	(0.405)	(0.362)
Observations	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95
R^2	0.112	0.111	0.110	0.107	0.123	0.118	0.122	0.119
Adjusted R^2	0.062	0.061	0.060	0.057	0.063	0.058	0.062	0.059
Residual Std. Error	0.416 (df = 89)	0.416 (df = 89)	0.416 (df = 89)	0.417 (df = 89)	0.415 (df = 88)	0.417 (df = 88)	0.416 (df = 88)	0.416 (df = 88)
F Statistic	2.240* (df = 5; 89)	2.214* (df = 5; 89)	2.192* (df = 5; 89)	2.134* (df = 5; 89)	2.049* (df = 6; 88)	1.964* (df = 6; 88)	2.038* (df = 6; 88)	1.981* (df = 6; 88)
Note:								*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: Higher proximity and centrism scores denote higher levels of party-voter incongruence.

Table 11. Fixed-Effects Estimates for In-Party Affective Evaluations

	Dependent variable:							
	In-Party Evaluations							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
RILEpolar	0.009	0.009	0.008	0.008				
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)				
cultural					0.009	0.007	0.011	0.011
					(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)
economic					0.003	0.004	0.001	−0.0002
					(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
unemployment	0.002	0.001	0.003	0.004	−0.0004	−0.001	0.001	0.002
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)
satisfaction	0.868*	0.846*	0.879*	0.906*	0.803	0.797	0.794	0.821
	(0.482)	(0.475)	(0.476)	(0.477)	(0.500)	(0.494)	(0.493)	(0.492)
MEANproximity	0.0004				0.002			
	(0.038)				(0.038)			
MEANcentrism		0.158				0.155		
		(0.126)				(0.129)		
EXPproximity			−0.030				−0.033	
			(0.025)				(0.025)	
EXPcentrism				−0.036				−0.043
				(0.030)				(0.031)
Observations	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95
R^2	0.090	0.113	0.111	0.111	0.077	0.099	0.103	0.106
Adjusted R^2	−0.426	−0.390	−0.393	−0.393	−0.470	−0.435	−0.429	−0.425
F Statistic	1.480 (df = 4; 60)	1.912 (df = 4; 60)	1.875 (df = 4; 60)	1.868 (df = 4; 60)	0.987 (df = 5; 59)	1.300 (df = 5; 59)	1.354 (df = 5; 59)	1.397 (df = 5; 59)
Note:								*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: Higher proximity and centrism scores denote higher levels of party-voter incongruence.

At this point stand out several points to be cleared out considering our tentative findings. First concerns where satisfaction with democarcy stands with

respect to our set of independent variables. Democratic satisfaction has been discussed to refer to a variety of attitudes and instead of corresponding to a set of norms on democracy, it is closer to reflecting citizen opinions on the functioning of the democratic system in its entirety (Anderson & Guillory, 1997) with a "low level of abstraction" (Anderson, 1998), and it has been shown by a multitude of research that satisfaction with democracy is highly predicted by macroeconomic performance evaluations of citizens (Anderson, 1998; Kornberg & Clarke, 1994; Weatherford, 1984), as well as their "winner" statuses when the parties they vote enters the government (Anderson & Guillory, 1997; Blais et al., 2017; M. Kim, 2009), and more related to the essentials of democratic governance, citizen representation in legislatures and government (Aarts & Thomassen, 2008; Mayne & Hakhverdian, 2017; Russo et al., 2023; Stecker & Tausendpfund, 2016).

In this regard, we might expect the addition of democratic satisfaction as a control variable to have some influence on the predictive power of unemployment as a macroeconomic predictor and party-voter congruence as our main predictor, although the relationship between this particular kind of citizen-representative congruence and democratic satisfaction has not been subject to any study so far. Indeed, the pairwise correlation matrix in Table 5 for all the variables employed in our analyses indicate that democratic satisfaction rates highly correlate with unemployment levels (r = -0.42), and more remarkably, both proximity measures for party-voter congruence (r = -0.42 for *perceived proximity* and r = -0.32 for *expert placement-based proximity*) albeit with moderate coefficients. To check the validity of our results, therefore, the models presented above are replicated without adding democratic satisfaction as control variable. The complete set of replicated OLS and fixed-effects models are in Appendix B.

In the replicated models too we observe a complex relationship between party-voter congruence and affective polarization. Although none of our congruence measures indicate an association with affective polarization as well as in- and out-party affective evaluations in replicated OLS models resonating with the baseline predictions above, perceived proximity (MEANproximity) scores retain their salience and significance in driving affective polarization and negative out-party evaluations when within country variations are studied with fixed-effect models. Similarly, our other congruence measure, expert placements' based centrism (EXPcentrism), not only retains its significance in curbing negative out-party evaluations but also boosts its significance level in predicting lower affective polarization scores. Therefore, as pointed above after presenting our baseline models, we observe a countermovement between two measures of party-voter congruence. On the one hand, an increase in perceived proximity scores – thus lesser perceived congruence between partisans and political parties – is expected to fuel affective polarization and negative out-party evaluations in a counterintuitive fashion, yet when centrism scores relying on expert placements are accounted for, we expect a significant drop in affective polarization levels and negative evaluations against other parties in the system.

5.3 Discussion and conclusions

To get a clearer sense of this observed countermovement related to a single concept, party-voter congruence, a substantial distinction between the measures of *proximity* and *centrism* ought to be drawn. Recalling the explication of our main predictors in accordance with the formulae laid out by Achen (1978), *proximity* roughly corresponds to the mean distance of voter self-placements from parties' ideological

placements while the *centrism* measure equalled the subtraction of the variance of voter-self placements in a given constituency from the proximity value, hence a weighted measure of proximity with respect to the variation within voters. In this equation, a high centrism score is possible when there is minimal variation within a voter base– within the confines of this study, a partisan base – and a considerable level of average voter distance from the political party. Therefore, hypothetically, there might exist a political party whose average distance from its voters is higher compared to other political parties, yet provided that the voter self-placements are not clustered within a narrow interval, the centrism score of this party could be remarkably low. In an opposite scenario where a political party of partisans whose average squared distances to the party is minimal, voter self-placements might be clustered farther from the ideological position of the political party.

From the voter perspective, the latter scenario is arguably more salient, as a significant portion of her fellow voters are placed farther from the party position, and this distance is small relative to the dispersion of her fellow voters. In the words of Achen (1978, 487), representatives might be more ideologically distant from their voters but they can minimize this distance by moving closer to the voter mean, a logic from which the second measure is dubbed "centrism". A high centrism score, therefore, indicates that the party is more distant from the average citizen of its voter base. In light of our findings presented above, in this regard, it appears sound that higher centrism scores significantly curb affective polarization. Considering that the negative effect of a unit increase in centrism on overall affective polarization scores is slightly higher than the positive effect of the same on out-party evaluations, particularly after removing the satisfaction with democracy as a possible confounder,

we might hypothesize that a similar curbing effect on in-party evaluations is at least partially underway, yet as presented above, it is not stastically significant.

The more puzzling part of our findings concerns the driving role of perceived proximity on negative out-party evaluations and affective polarization. As evident from the Table 5, both our proximity measures highly correlate with democratic satisfaction in our sample yet with and without controlling for democratic satisfaction, the perceived proximity measure (MEANproximity) is significantly predicted to boost affective polarization and negative out-party evaluations. Conducting a detailed mediation analysis for panel desing to ascertain the exact degree to which the boosting effect of MEANproximity on our affect measures is beyond the confines of this study, but considering the abovementioned link between congruence and democratic satisfaction in the literature and findings, it can be suggested that at least a portion of proximity effects on affective polarization and out-party evaluations is linked to democratic satisfaction as a mediator. Democratic satisfaction as a compound political reality connected to macroeconomic performance evaluations as well as the perceptions and realities of democratic representation in legislatures, governments, and as our findings indicate, political parties makes it difficult for us to make direct inference between proximity and our dependent variables.

In light of our three main hypothesis, then, the picture appears rather intricate. On the one hand, the first hypothesis that an increase in party-voter incongruence is linked to dropping in-party evaluations is clearly rejected as the abovementioned findings suggest. On the other hand, our results suggest that two strands of party-voter congruence are linked to out-party evaluations and affective polarization scores in a different fashion. When congruence is measured by perceived proximity, we

observe a counterintuitive relationship where the growing distance between political parties and voters spur negative out-party evaluations and overall affective polarization scores, partially related to dropping percentages of democratic satisfaction in a polity. However, when we measure party-voter congruence by centrism scores based on expert placements, the findings lend support to the second and third hypothesis that indeed, the growing distance between voters and political parties is linked to more positive out-party evaluations and ameliorates affective polarization. The intriguing point here is that the drop in affective polarization levels does not seem to be significantly linked to lower in-party evaluations but rather an increase in positive evaluations toward other parties in the system. In sum, we cannot confirm the first hypothesis yet we can partially confirm the second and the third depending on what measure of party-voter congruence we employ.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Existing and proliferating literature on affective polarization so far has discussed two main sources of partisan animosity and dislike: partisan loyalties as "tribalist" social affiliations that spur hate and animosity based on a distinction between in- and out-group identities, and voters' disagreement on a vast array of policy issues as well as political ideologies (e.g., *liberal-conservative, left-right*). This thesis, unlike many studies in the field, does not single out a particular locus of affective polarization over others but rather aims to introduce a rather understudied dimension which could have an impact on affective polarization with its in- and out-party affective elements. In doing so, it underscores the essentiality of representation, one of the crucial functions that liberal democratic systems and parties as the primary agents purport to fulfil. Drawing on a pooled dataset consisting of 27 democracies and 95 election cycles in the CSES Integrated Module, it sheds light on a possible associating between affective polarization and the alignment between political parties and partisans, a field of study which has not been subject to empirical study with only a few exceptions at voter level (Marchal and Watson 2022), while country-level studies to this day have not problematized congruence viz. the trends in affective polarization. Therefore, I deem this line of study significant for future studies on citizen-representative congruence and affective polarization.

To provide a multidimensional space in which we can observe the possible links between party-voter congruence on the one hand affective polarization on the other, I differentiate between the level of analysis to be employed and just as

importantly, I draw a distinction between voter perceptions and expert placements in figuring party positions on the left-right scale with which we can measure congruence at both levels. Main findings of this research lend support to the rationale for this distinction: we observe different linkages between party-voter disagreement and affective polarization depending on whether we study voter-level or country-level variations in polarization and whether we measure congruence relying on voter perceptions or expert placements of political parties on the left-right spectrum.

First part of the thesis concerns the effects of party-voter disagreement on affective polarization levels considering its in- and out-party affect components, and the findings indicate that indeed, as the perceived ideological distance of a voter from the party she identifies with grows, we expect lesser affective polarization with significantly more positive affective evaluations toward other parties in the system and congruently, more negative evaluations toward the identified party with a relatively stronger impact. Recalling the distinction between the different strategies in locating political parties on the left-right spectrum, however, these significant effects are absent when party-voter congruence is measured relying on expert placements of political parties. As for our control variables of interest in predicting affective evaluations, we observe that ideological polarization spurs more negative out-party evaluations and more positive in-party evaluations, associated with a net increase in affective polarization scores. Partisanship strength, on the other hand, seems to be linked to more positive in-party evaluations and higher affective polarization levels, yet such a significant linkage is absent in out-party affect predictions, cautioning as that the "tribalist" elements of partisan affiliations as a social identity might not be the leading explanatory factor behind the animosity toward other parties in the system as put forward by the existing literature (Greene,

1999, 2004; Iyengar et al., 2012). Effects of the satisfaction with democracy, discussed by Wagner (2021) as a predictor for increased affective polarization, are nil for overall affective polarization scores since our findings suggest that voters who express satisfaction are expected to have simultaneously more positive evaluations toward their parties and others in their respective party system.

The second part of this thesis involving country-level analyses of affective polarization, however, presents us with a more complex picture concerning a possible link between party-voter congruence and our three affective measures. In contrast with the clear and robust findings of our cross-sectional voter-level analyses, these analyses suggest that an increase in the *proximity* scores, meaning the average distance between the political parties and their partisans, is associated with a significant rise in affective polarization levels and negative out-party evaluations, though its relationship with overall in-party evaluations seem insignificant. On the other hand, when the degree of *centrism* is taken into account while measuring congruence, corresponding to the average distance between partisans and political parties relative to the variance of partisans' ideological self-placement, we observe paralleling results with our voter-level analyses as increases in centrism scores are associated with increasingly positive out-party affective evaluations and ameliorating affective polarization levels in total. Echoing the existing literature on the relationship between citizen-representative congruence and democratic satisfaction at broader level (Aarts & Thomassen, 2008; Mayne & Hakhverdian, 2017), the driving effect of party-voter congruence based on our *proximity* measures seems to be highly influenced by a mediator, satisfaction with democracy, whereas the ameliorative impact of *centrism* congruence appears to be mostly independent from this mediation effect.

Before situating these findings in the broader literature and upcoming research, two important shortcomings of this research should be noted. First and foremost, given the cross-sectional design of the study, only the conventional left-right scale could used as the benchmark from which we measure party-voter congruence at individual and country level. Given the frequently voiced fact that political parties in many Western democracies are often well-aligned with their voters on the left-right continuum (Belchior, 2010, 2013) in contrast with their partial failure at reflecting public opinion on other issue agendas (Costello et al., 2012; Mattila & Raunio, 2006; Schmitt & Thomassen, 1999; Thomassen, 2012), a more multidimensional approach in studying party-voter congruence in relation to affective polarization is needed. Debates on European integration/Euroscepticism, redistributive politics, immigration, and so forth which hold a cross-national traction in many Western democracies could be used as proxies to capture party-voter congruence. Second, and relatedly, measures that tap into the strength of partisan affiliations and ideological polarization are limited to unidimensional spaces and confined intervals in this study, again due to the dearth of cross-national survey data. For the former, a simple ordinal scale ranging from 1 to 3 is employed in the CSES surveys, while many studies in the US employ more fine-grained measures to operationalize partisanship as a social identity (Greene, 1999, 2004; Huddy et al., 2015) and ideological/policy-based polarization based on a wide range of social issues (Lelkes, 2021; Reiljan & Ryan, 2021; Webster & Abramowitz, 2017) instead of a simple left-right scale used in this study. Although both of these shortcomings stem from the cross-national feature of this research, there is room for improvement.

Considered from a broader perspective and particularly linked to our discussion and findings in the second chapter, citizen-representative congruence

ought not be construed as a simple case of disagreement in an isolate fashion. On the contrary, as our results indicate, party representativeness, like the debates on affective polarization, should be situated in a larger research framework revolving around the main tenets of liberal democratic regimes whose survival is considered to be at stake (Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018). Therefore, in accordance with recent studies on congruence (M. Kim, 2009; Mayne & Hakhverdian, 2017; Russo et al., 2023; Stecker & Tausendpfund, 2016), citizen-representative congruence should be instrumentalized as a predictor to explain a wider scope of social and political phenomena, a goal I aimed at approximating within the confines of this thesis with respect to a possible relationship with affective polarization. Since the scope of this thesis limited to party-voter congruence, I anticipate an upcoming series of research focusing on citizen-government congruence with respect to affective polarization as governments make a more salient platform with which citizens develop perceptions of representation and subsequent behavior, most important of which is their overall level of satisfaction with the democratic regimes they reside in. Such venues of future research, I believe, will not only expand our knowledge on the perceptions and realities of citizen representation but also on its possible implications, one of which I purported to discuss.

APPENDIX A

ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL PARTIES INCLUDED IN THE SAMPLE

Election	Political Parties
Australia 1996	Liberal Party (LP), National Party of Australia (NPA), Australian Labor Party (ALP), Australian Democrats (AD)
Australia 2004	Liberal Party (LP), National Party of Australia (NPA), Australian Labor Party (ALP), Australian Greens (AG)
Australia 2007	Liberal Party (LP), National Party of Australia (NPA), Australian Labor Party (ALP), Australian Greens (AG)
Australia 2013	Liberal Party (LP), National Party of Australia (NPA), Australian Labor Party (ALP), Australian Greens (AG)
Austria 2008	Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPO), Austrian People's Party (OVP), Freedom Party of Austria (FPO), Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZO), The Greens - The Green Alternative (GRUENE)
Austria 2013	Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPO), Austrian People's Party (OVP), Freedom Party of Austria (FPO), The

	Greens - The Green Alternative (GRUENE), The New Austria (NEOS)
Canada 1997	Liberal Party (LIB), New Democratic Party (NDP), Bloc Quebecois (BQ), Progressive Conservative (PC), Reform Party (RPC)
Canada 2004	Liberal Party (LIB), New Democratic Party (NDP), Bloc Quebecois (BQ), Conservative Party (CP)
Canada 2008	Liberal Party (LIB), New Democratic Party (NDP), Bloc Quebecois (BQ), Conservative Party (CP), Green Party (GP)
Canada 2011	Liberal Party (LIB), New Democratic Party (NDP), Bloc Quebecois (BQ), Conservative Party (CP), Green Party (GP)
Canada 2015	Liberal Party (LIB), New Democratic Party (NDP), Bloc Quebecois (BQ), Conservative Party (CP), Green Party (GP)
Switzerland 1999	Swiss People's Party (SVP/UDC), Social Democratic Party (SP/PS), Christian Democratic People's Party(CVP/PDC),

	Green Party (GPS/PES), Radical Democratic Party (FDP/PLR)
Switzerland 2003	Swiss People's Party (SVP/UDC), Social Democratic Party (SP/PS), Christian Democratic People's Party(CVP/PDC), Green Party (GPS/PES), Radical Democratic Party (FDP/PLR)
Switzerland 2007	Swiss People's Party (SVP/UDC), Social Democratic Party (SP/PS), Christian Democratic People's Party(CVP/PDC), Green Party (GPS/PES), Radical Democratic Party (FDP/PLR), Evangelical People's Party (EVP/PEP)
Switzerland 2011	Swiss People's Party (SVP/UDC), Social Democratic Party (SP/PS), Christian Democratic People's Party(CVP/PDC), The Liberals (FDP/PLR), Green Party (GPS/PES), Evangelical People's Party (EVP/PEP)
Czech Republic 1996	Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD), Civic Democratic Party (ODS), Christian Democratic Union - Czech People's Party (KDU-CSL), Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM), Civic Democratic Alliance

	(ODA), Association for the Republic - Czech Republican Party (SPR-RSC)
Czech Republic 2006	Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD), Civic Democratic Party (ODS), Christian Democratic Union - Czech People's Party (KDU-CSL), Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM), Green Party (SZ)
Czech Republic 2010	Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD), Civic Democratic Party (ODS), Christian Democratic Union - Czech People's Party (KDU-CSL), Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM), Green Party (SZ), TOP 09 (TOP 09), Public Affairs (VV)
Czech Republic 2013	Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD), Civic Democratic Party (ODS), Christian Democratic Union - Czech People's Party (KDU-CSL), Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM), Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (ANO 2011), TOP 09 (TOP 09), Dawn of Direct Democracy of Tomio Okamura (Usvit)

Germany 1998	Christian Democratic Party (CDU), Christian Social Union in Bavaria (CSU), Social Democratic Party (SPD), Alliance 90/Greens (B90/GRUENE), Free Democratic Party (FDP), Left Party (DIE LINKE)
Germany 2002	Christian Democratic Party (CDU), Christian Social Union in Bavaria (CSU), Social Democratic Party (SPD), Alliance 90/Greens (B90/GRUENE), Free Democratic Party (FDP), Left Party (DIE LINKE)
Germany 2005	Christian Democratic Party (CDU), Christian Social Union in Bavaria (CSU), Social Democratic Party (SPD), Alliance 90/Greens (B90/GRUENE), Free Democratic Party (FDP), Left Party (DIE LINKE)
Germany 2009	Christian Democratic Party (CDU), Christian Social Union in Bavaria (CSU), Social Democratic Party (SPD), Alliance 90/Greens (B90/GRUENE), Free Democratic Party (FDP), Left Party (DIE LINKE)

Germany 2013	Christian Democratic Party (CDU), Christian Social Union in Bavaria (CSU), Social Democratic Party (SPD), Alliance 90/Greens (B90/GRUENE), Free Democratic Party (FDP), Left Party (DIE LINKE), Alternative for Germany (AfD), Pirates Party (PIRATEN)
Spain 1996	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE), People's Party (PP), Convergence and Union (CiU), United Left (IU), Basque Nationalist Party (PNV)
Spain 2004	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE), People's Party (PP), Convergence and Union (CiU), United Left (IU),
Spain 2008	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE), People's Party (PP), Convergence and Union (CiU), United Left (IU), Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC)
Finland 2003	Center Party (KESK), Social Democratic Party of Finland (SDP), National Coalition Party (KOK), Green

	League (VIHR), Left Alliance (VAS), Christian Democrats (KD), Swedish People's Party in Finland (RKP-SFP)
Finland 2007	Center Party (KESK), Social Democratic Party of Finland (SDP), National Coalition Party (KOK), Green League (VIHR), Left Alliance (VAS), Christian Democrats (KD), Swedish People's Party in Finland (RKP-SFP)
Finland 2011	Center Party (KESK), Social Democratic Party of Finland (SDP), National Coalition Party (KOK), Green League (VIHR), Left Alliance (VAS), Christian Democrats (KD), Swedish People's Party in Finland (RKP-SFP), True Finns (PS)
Finland 2015	Center Party (KESK), Social Democratic Party of Finland (SDP), National Coalition Party (KOK), Green League (VIHR), Left Alliance (VAS), Christian Democrats (KD), Swedish People's Party in Finland (RKP-SFP), True Finns (PS)
France 2002	Socialist Party (PS), Democratic Movement (MoDem), French

	Communist Party (PCF), Europe Ecology - The Greens (EELV), National Front (FN), Rally For The Republic (RPR)
France 2007	Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), Socialist Party (PS), Democratic Movement (MoDem), French Communist Party (PCF), Europe Ecology - The Greens (EELV), National Front (FN)
France 2012	Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), Socialist Party (PS), Democratic Movement (MoDem), Europe Ecology - The Greens (EELV), National Front (FN), Left Front (FDG)
United Kingdom 1997	Conservatives (Con), Labor (Lab), Liberal Democrats (LD)
United Kingdom 2005	Conservatives (Con), Labor (Lab), Liberal Democrats (LD)
United Kingdom 2015	Conservatives (Con), Labor (Lab), Liberal Democrats (LD), United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), Green Party (GP)
Hungary 1998	Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party Alliance

	Party (Fidesz - MPP), Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIEP), Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ), Independent Small Holders Party (FKgP)
Hungary 2002	Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party Alliance Party (Fidesz - MPP), Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIEP), Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ), Alliance for Hungary - Center Party
Ireland 2002	Fianna Fail (FF), Fine Gael (FG), Labor (Lab), Sinn Fein (SF), Greens (GP) , Progressive Democrats (PD)
Ireland 2011	Fianna Fail (FF), Fine Gael (FG), Labor (Lab), Sinn Fein (SF)
Iceland 1999	Independence Party (Sj), Social Democratic Alliance (Sam), Progressive Party (F), Left-Green Movement (VG)
Iceland 2003	Independence Party (Sj), Social Democratic Alliance (Sam), Progressive Party (F), Left-Green Movement (VG), Liberal Party (FF)
Iceland 2007	Independence Party (Sj), Social Democratic Alliance (Sam), Progressive

	Party (F), Left-Green Movement (VG), Liberal Party (FF)
Iceland 2009	Independence Party (Sj), Social Democratic Alliance (Sam), Progressive Party (F), Left-Green Movement (VG), Civic Movement (B)
Iceland 2013	Independence Party (Sj), Social Democratic Alliance (Sam), Progressive Party (F), Left-Green Movement (VG), Bright Future (BF), Pirata (Pi)
Israel 1996	Likud - The Consolidation (L), Israeli Labor Party (MHH), Sfarad's Keepers of the Torah (Shas), Energy (Meretz), National Religious Party (Mafdal)
Israel 2003	Likud - The Consolidation (L), Israeli Labor Party (MHH), Sfarad's Keepers of the Torah (Shas), Energy (Meretz), Change (Shinui), National Union (HaLe)
Israel 2006	Likud - The Consolidation (L), Israeli Labor Party (MHH), Sfarad's Keepers of the Torah (Shas), Forward (Kadima), Israel is Our Home (YB), National Union - National Religious Party (HaLe - Mafdal)

Israel 2013	Israeli Labor Party (MHH), Sfarad's Keepers of the Torah (Shas), There is a Future (YA), The Jewish Home (HH), The Movement (Hat), The Consolidation (Likud) - Yisrael Beiteinu (L - YB)
South Korea 2000	New Frontier Party (NFP), Millennium Democratic Party (MDP), United Liberal Democrats (ULD)
South Korea 2004	New Frontier Party (NFP), Millennium Democratic Party (MDP), United Liberal Democrats (ULD), Democratic Labor Party (DLP), Our Party
South Korea 2008	New Frontier Party (NFP), Liberty Forward Party (LFP), New Progressive Party (NPP), Democratic United Party (DUP), Pro-Park Geun-hye Alliance, Democratic Labor Party (DLP), Renewal of Korea Party
South Korea 2012	New Frontier Party (NFP), Liberty Forward Party (LFP), Democratic United Party (DUP), Unified Progressive Party (UPP)
Latvia 2010	Harmony Centre (SC), Unity (V), National Union All for Latvia For

	Fatherland and Freedom (LNNK), For a Good Latvia (PLL), Union of Greens and Farmers (ZZS)
Latvia 2011	Harmony Centre (SC), Unity (V), National Union All for Latvia For Fatherland and Freedom (LNNK), Union of Greens and Farmers (ZZS), Reform Party (RP)
Latvia 2014	Harmony Centre (SC), Unity (V), National Union All for Latvia For Fatherland and Freedom (LNNK), Union of Greens and Farmers (ZZS), For Latvia from the Heart (NsL), Latvian Association of the Regions (LRa)
Mexico 1997	Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), National Action Party (PAN), Democratic Revolution Party (PRD), Ecological Green Party of Mexico (PVEM)
Mexico 2003	Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), National Action Party (PAN), Democratic Revolution Party (PRD), Ecological Green Party of Mexico

	(PVEM), Labor Party (PT), Citizen`s Movement (MC)
Mexico 2009	Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), National Action Party (PAN), Democratic Revolution Party (PRD), Ecological Green Party of Mexico (PVEM), Labor Party (PT), New Alliance Party (PANAL,PNA)
Mexico 2012	Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), National Action Party (PAN), Democratic Revolution Party (PRD)
Mexico 2015	Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), National Action Party (PAN), Democratic Revolution Party (PRD), Ecological Green Party of Mexico (PVEM), Citizen`s Movement (MC), National Regeneration Movement (MORENA)
Netherlands 1998	Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), Labor Party (PvdA), People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), Democrats 66 (D66), Green Left (GL), Socialist Party (SP), Reformed Political Alliance (GPV)

Netherlands 2002	Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), Labor Party (PvdA), People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), Democrats 66 (D66), Green Left (GL), Socialist Party (SP), Reformed Political Party (SGP), Christian Union (CU), List Pim Fortuyn LPF
Netherlands 2006	Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), Labor Party (PvdA), People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), Democrats 66 (D66), Green Left (GL), Socialist Party (SP), Reformed Political Party (SGP), Christian Union (CU), Party for Freedom PVV
Netherlands 2010	Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), Labor Party (PvdA), People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), Democrats 66 (D66), Green Left (GL), Socialist Party (SP), Reformed Political Party (SGP), Christian Union (CU), Party for Freedom PVV
New Zealand 2002	National Party (NP), Labor Party (Lab), New Zealand First (NZF), Act New Zealand (ACT), Green Party (GP), United Future New Zealand (UFNZ)

New Zealand 2008	National Party (NP), Labor Party (Lab), New Zealand First (NZF), Act New Zealand (ACT), Green Party (GP), Maori Party (MP), Jim Anderton's Progressive Party (PP)
New Zealand 2011	National Party (NP), Labor Party (Lab), New Zealand First (NZF), Green Party (GP), Maori Party (MP)
New Zealand 2014	National Party (NP), Labor Party (Lab), New Zealand First (NZF), Green Party (GP), Maori Party (MP)
Poland 1997	Polish Peasants' (or People's) Party (PSL), Solidarity Electoral Action (AWSP), Labor Union (UP), Freedom Union (UW), Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), Movement for Reconstruction of Poland (ROP)
Poland 2001	Civic Platform (PO), Law and Justice (PiS), Polish Peasants' (or People's) Party (PSL), League of Polish Families (LPR), Self-Defense of the Republic Poland (SRP), Coalition Of The Alliance Of The Democratic Left - The Union of Labor (SLD-UP)

Poland 2005	Civic Platform (PO), Law and Justice (PiS), Polish Peasants' (or People's) Party (PSL), League of Polish Families (LPR), Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), Self-Defense of the Republic Poland (SRP)
Poland 2007	Civic Platform (PO), Law and Justice (PiS), Polish Peasants' (or People's) Party (PSL), Left and Democrats (LiD)
Poland 2011	Civic Platform (PO), Law and Justice (PiS), Polish Peasants' (or People's) Party (PSL), League of Polish Families (LPR), Palikots Movement
Portugal 2002	Social Democratic Party (PSD), Socialist Party (PS), Democratic and Social Centre - People's Party (CDS-PP), Unitarian Democratic Coalition (CDU), Left Block (BE)
Portugal 2005	Social Democratic Party (PSD), Socialist Party (PS), Democratic and Social Centre - People's Party (CDS-PP), Unitarian Democratic Coalition (CDU), Left Block (BE)
Portugal 2009	Social Democratic Party (PSD), Socialist Party (PS), Democratic and

	Social Centre - People's Party (CDS-PP), Unitarian Democratic Coalition (CDU), Left Block (BE)
Portugal 2015	Socialist Party (PS), Unitarian Democratic Coalition (CDU), Left Block (BE), Portugal Ahead (PSD - CDS-PP)
Slovakia 2010	Direction - Social Democracy (Smer), Freedom and Solidarity (SaS), Slovak Democratic and Christian Union - Democratic Party (SDKU - DS), Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), Slovak National Party (SNS), Bridge (MH), People's Party - Movement For a Democratic Slovakia (LS - HZDS)
Slovakia 2016	Direction - Social Democracy (Smer), Freedom and Solidarity (SaS), Slovak National Party (SNS), Bridge (MH), Ordinary people - Independents solidarities (OLaNO), Kotleba - People's Party Our Slovakia (LsNS), We are family (SR)
Sweden 1998	Social Democratic Worker's Party (SAP), Moderate Party (M), Liberal

	People's Party (FP), Christian Democrats (KD), Centre Party (C), Left Party (V)
Sweden 2002	Social Democratic Worker's Party (SAP), Moderate Party (M), Liberal People's Party (FP), Christian Democrats (KD), Centre Party (C), Left Party (V)
Sweden 2006	Social Democratic Worker's Party (SAP), Moderate Party (M), Liberal People's Party (FP), Christian Democrats (KD), Centre Party (C), Left Party (V), Green Party (MP)
Sweden 2014	Social Democratic Worker's Party (SAP), Moderate Party (M), Liberal People's Party (FP), Christian Democrats (KD), Centre Party (C), Left Party (V), Green Party (MP), Sweden Democrats (SD)
Turkey 2011	Justice and Development Party (AKP), Republican People's Party (CHP), Nationalist Action Party (MHP), Peace and Democratic Party (BDP)
Turkey 2015	Justice and Development Party (AKP), Republican People's Party (CHP),

	Nationalist Action Party (MHP), Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP)
United States 2004	Republican Party (GOP), Democratic Party (DEM)
United States 2008	Republican Party (GOP), Democratic Party (DEM)
United States 2012	Republican Party (GOP), Democratic Party (DEM)
South Africa 2009	African National Congress (ANC), Democratic Alliance (DA), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), Congress of the People (COPE)
South Africa 2014	African National Congress (ANC), Democratic Alliance (DA), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), Congress of the People (COPE), Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)
Greece 2009	Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), New Democracy (ND), Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA), Communist Party of Greece (KKE)
Greece 2012	Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), New Democracy (ND), Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA), Communist Party of Greece (KKE),

	Golden Dawn (LS - XA), The Independent Greeks (ANEL), Democratic Left (DIMAR)
Greece 2015	Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), New Democracy (ND), Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA), Communist Party of Greece (KKE), Golden Dawn (LS - XA), The Independent Greeks (ANEL), The River

APPENDIX B

COUNTRY-LEVEL MODEL REPLICATIONS EXCLUDING SATISFACTION WITH DEMOCRACY

Table B1. OLS Estimates for Affective Polarization Index (API) Scores

	Dependent variable:							
	API							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
RILEpolar	0.003	0.001	−0.0001	−0.002				
	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.014)				
cultural					−0.015	−0.013	−0.015	−0.015
					(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.023)
economic					0.013	0.009	0.010	0.007
					(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.021)
unemployment	0.067***	0.068***	0.068***	0.071***	0.069***	0.070***	0.070***	0.073***
	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.018)	(0.020)
magnitude	−0.066	−0.076	−0.072	−0.075	−0.056	−0.068	−0.062	−0.065
	(0.095)	(0.100)	(0.099)	(0.101)	(0.101)	(0.106)	(0.105)	(0.107)
MEANproximity	0.055				0.059			
	(0.051)				(0.049)			
MEANcentrism		0.241				0.226		
		(0.233)				(0.224)		
EXPproximity			0.004				0.007	
			(0.023)				(0.024)	
EXPcentrism				−0.017				−0.013
				(0.034)				(0.035)
Constant	3.788***	3.969***	4.039***	4.093***	3.760***	3.958***	3.996***	4.065***
	(0.416)	(0.291)	(0.361)	(0.292)	(0.394)	(0.292)	(0.367)	(0.303)
Observations	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95
R^2	0.207	0.204	0.196	0.198	0.216	0.210	0.204	0.204
Adjusted R^2	0.172	0.169	0.161	0.162	0.172	0.166	0.159	0.159
Residual Std. Error	0.709 (df = 90)	0.710 (df = 90)	0.714 (df = 90)	0.713 (df = 90)	0.709 (df = 89)	0.712 (df = 89)	0.715 (df = 89)	0.715 (df = 89)
F Statistic	5.867*** (df = 4; 90)	5.776*** (df = 4; 90)	5.498*** (df = 4; 90)	5.551*** (df = 4; 90)	4.894*** (df = 5; 89)	4.737*** (df = 5; 89)	4.555*** (df = 5; 89)	4.564*** (df = 5; 89)
Note:								*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table B2. Fixed-Effects Estimates for Affective Polarization Index (API) Scores

Table 1:

	Dependent variable:							
	API							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
RILEpolar	0.012	0.013	0.013	0.011				
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)				
cultural					0.033*	0.032*	0.035**	0.038**
					(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)
economic					0.016	0.017	0.016	0.010
					(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.013)
unemployment	0.021	0.019	0.021	0.023	0.012	0.011	0.012	0.015
	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.014)
MEANproximity	0.095*				0.090*			
	(0.049)				(0.048)			
MEANcentrism		0.212				0.179		
		(0.170)				(0.168)		
EXPproximity			−0.017				−0.019	
			(0.034)				(0.033)	
EXPcentrism				−0.074*				−0.081**
				(0.040)				(0.040)
Observations	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95
R^2	0.117	0.087	0.067	0.114	0.173	0.140	0.129	0.180
Adjusted R^2	−0.360	−0.407	−0.437	−0.366	−0.296	−0.347	−0.365	−0.284
F Statistic	2.699* (df = 3; 61)	1.938 (df = 3; 61)	1.468 (df = 3; 61)	2.606* (df = 3; 61)	3.127** (df = 4; 60)	2.451* (df = 4; 60)	2.219* (df = 4; 60)	3.298** (df = 4; 60)
Note:								*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table B3. OLS Estimates for Out-Party Affective Evaluations

	Dependent variable:							
	Out-Party Evaluations							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
RILEpolar	0.005	0.005	0.008	0.009				
	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)				
cultural					0.009	0.008	0.009	0.011
					(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)
economic					0.001	0.002	0.006	0.009
					(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.015)
unemployment	−0.069***	−0.069***	−0.073***	−0.076***	−0.070***	−0.070***	−0.073***	−0.076***
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.013)
magnitude	0.150***	0.153***	0.158***	0.159***	0.144**	0.148**	0.151**	0.152**
	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.059)	(0.062)	(0.063)	(0.064)	(0.065)
MEANproximity	−0.011				−0.015			
	(0.046)				(0.046)			
MEANcentrism		−0.086				−0.087		
		(0.204)				(0.198)		
EXPproximity			0.020				0.019	
			(0.024)				(0.025)	
EXPcentrism				0.049				0.050
				(0.036)				(0.037)
Constant	3.917***	3.893***	3.733***	3.777***	3.955***	3.913***	3.767***	3.795***
	(0.357)	(0.263)	(0.275)	(0.207)	(0.337)	(0.245)	(0.281)	(0.212)
Observations	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95
R^2	0.332	0.332	0.339	0.352	0.332	0.333	0.338	0.351
Adjusted R^2	0.302	0.303	0.309	0.323	0.295	0.295	0.300	0.315
Residual Std. Error	0.557 (df = 90)	0.557 (df = 90)	0.554 (df = 90)	0.548 (df = 90)	0.560 (df = 89)	0.560 (df = 89)	0.558 (df = 89)	0.552 (df = 89)
F Statistic	11.160*** (df = 4; 90)	11.200*** (df = 4; 90)	11.518*** (df = 4; 90)	12.209*** (df = 4; 90)	8.857*** (df = 5; 89)	8.867*** (df = 5; 89)	9.069*** (df = 5; 89)	9.643*** (df = 5; 89)
Note:								*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table B4. Fixed-Effects Estimates for Out-Party Affective Evaluations

	Dependent variable:							
	Out-Party Evaluations							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
RILEpolar	−0.002	−0.004	−0.004	−0.001				
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)				
cultural					−0.024*	−0.026	−0.026*	−0.029*
					(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)
economic					−0.015	−0.017	−0.018	−0.012
					(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)
unemployment	−0.031**	−0.030**	−0.030**	−0.033**	−0.023*	−0.022	−0.022	−0.025*
	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)
MEANproximity	−0.130***				−0.122***			
	(0.043)				(0.042)			
MEANcentrism		−0.104				−0.073		
		(0.156)				(0.152)		
EXPproximity			−0.008				−0.010	
			(0.031)				(0.030)	
EXPcentrism				0.066*				0.064*
				(0.036)				(0.036)
Observations	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95
R^2	0.203	0.092	0.086	0.132	0.263	0.163	0.161	0.201
Adjusted R^2	−0.228	−0.400	−0.408	−0.337	−0.154	−0.312	−0.315	−0.252
F Statistic	5.192*** (df = 3; 61)	2.053 (df = 3; 61)	1.916 (df = 3; 61)	3.103** (df = 3; 61)	5.364*** (df = 4; 60)	2.911** (df = 4; 60)	2.877** (df = 4; 60)	3.764*** (df = 4; 60)
Note:								*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table B5. OLS Estimates for In-Party Affective Evaluations

	Dependent variable:							
	In-Party Evaluations							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
RILEpolar	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.007				
	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.008)				
cultural					0.013	0.011	0.015	0.015
					(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)
economic					0.002	0.002	−0.001	−0.002
					(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
unemployment	−0.014	−0.015	−0.013	−0.012	−0.016	−0.016	−0.014	−0.014
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.012)
MEANproximity	−0.002				−0.001			
	(0.038)				(0.039)			
MEANcentrism		0.166				0.157		
		(0.128)				(0.131)		
EXPproximity			−0.029				−0.034	
			(0.025)				(0.026)	
EXPcentrism				−0.032				−0.042
				(0.031)				(0.032)
Observations	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95
R^2	0.041	0.066	0.060	0.057	0.037	0.059	0.063	0.064
Adjusted R^2	−0.479	−0.439	−0.448	−0.453	−0.509	−0.474	−0.467	−0.467
F Statistic	0.858 (df = 3; 61)	1.443 (df = 3; 61)	1.309 (df = 3; 61)	1.233 (df = 3; 61)	0.574 (df = 4; 60)	0.948 (df = 4; 60)	1.016 (df = 4; 60)	1.019 (df = 4; 60)
Note:								*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table B6. Fixed-Effects Estimates for In-Party Affective Evaluations

	Dependent variable:							
	In-Party Evaluations							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
RILEpolar	0.008	0.007	0.008	0.007				
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)				
cultural					−0.005	−0.004	−0.004	−0.004
					(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)
economic					0.016	0.013	0.017	0.016
					(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.013)
unemployment	−0.0003	0.0002	−0.002	−0.001	0.001	0.001	−0.001	−0.001
	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.014)
magnitude	0.080	0.074	0.081	0.079	0.083	0.076	0.083	0.081
	(0.050)	(0.053)	(0.051)	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.056)	(0.054)	(0.055)
MEANproximity	0.036				0.036			
	(0.032)				(0.031)			
MEANcentrism		0.160				0.144		
		(0.160)				(0.154)		
EXPproximity			0.016				0.018	
			(0.015)				(0.015)	
EXPcentrism				0.019				0.022
				(0.023)				(0.023)
Constant	7.715***	7.830***	7.794***	7.863***	7.722***	7.839***	7.782***	7.852***
	(0.256)	(0.210)	(0.235)	(0.214)	(0.236)	(0.201)	(0.227)	(0.211)
Observations	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95
R^2	0.112	0.109	0.109	0.104	0.123	0.117	0.122	0.117
Adjusted R^2	0.072	0.069	0.069	0.065	0.073	0.067	0.072	0.068
Residual Std. Error	0.413 (df = 90)	0.414 (df = 90)	0.414 (df = 90)	0.415 (df = 90)	0.413 (df = 89)	0.414 (df = 89)	0.413 (df = 89)	0.414 (df = 89)
F Statistic	2.831** (df = 4; 90)	2.749** (df = 4; 90)	2.740** (df = 4; 90)	2.621** (df = 4; 90)	2.486** (df = 5; 89)	2.358** (df = 5; 89)	2.466** (df = 5; 89)	2.365** (df = 5; 89)
Note:								*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

APPENDIX C

CMP PARAMETERS INCLUDED IN ELITE IDEOLOGICAL POLARIZATION SCORES

Elite Cultural Polarization: per 601 + per 603 + per605 + per606 – (per 602 + per 604 + per607)

Elite Economic Polarization: per401 + per402 + per 407 + per414 + per505 + per702 – (per403 + per404 + per406 + per412 + per413 + per504 + per701)

Please see The Manifesto Project Dataset - Codebook. Manifesto Project (MRG / CMP / MARPOR). Version 2023a for a detailed explanation of the parameters and the parameters included in the RILE measure provided by the CMP database.

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