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ENTER THE PARTISAN FIRM: HOW AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION SHAPES
CORPORATION AND CAREER

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BY
JOSHUA GARY MAUSOLF

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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CHAPTER 2

Corporate Politics: The Emergence of Partisan Polarization in Firms, 1980-2018

Across the American republic, pundits, politicians, and social scientists alike have studied and speculated about the rising tide of partisan divisiveness threatening to inundate the political mooring of American society. Known as partisan polarization, and alternatively referred to as party sorting (Fiorina and Abrams 2008), the phenomenon has many definitions but often refers to the increased ability of political parties such as the Democratic and Republican parties to better sort individuals into ideological factions (Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; Fiorina and Abrams 2008; Fiorina et al. 2005; Lee 2015).¹ In the absence of ideological or policy issue measurements, however, as I will suggest, we can evaluate partisan polarization on the simple basis of whether individuals, or in this case, groups of individuals within firms, become increasingly sorted along party lines, becoming more strongly Democratic or Republican. Such a perspective is particularly compelling when we view polarization, in this case partisan polarization or party sorting, as a process not a state (DiMaggio et al. 1996; Fiorina and Abrams 2008). Evaluating the strength of partisan attachment and ability to better sort individuals into distinctive partisan factions is at the core of the party sorting or partisan polarization research and is important in its own right as a temporal process (Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; DiMaggio et al. 1996; Fiorina and Abrams 2008). As each individual's identification with a party crystalizes, that partisanship may be reified through social media (An et al. 2014; Bail et al. 2018; Bello and Rolfe 2014), and analyzed relative to public opinion and social attitudes (Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; DiMaggio et al.

¹Note that this is a phenomenon distinct from political polarization where the ideological distribution between parties, particularly along policy positions, "must be far apart... and... tightly clustered around the party mean" (Poole and Rosenthal 1997: 81). Instead, party sorting or partisan polarization can occur even with heterogenous ideological positions and policy attitudes within and between parties (Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; Baldassarri and Goldberg 2014; Fiorina and Abrams 2008; Fiorina et al. 2005; Lee 2015).

1996). At the crux of potential ramifications to the American politic, partisan polarization relates to the rise in “affective polarization,” a shifting of attitudes, particularly animosity toward or negative evaluations about those of the opposing political party, otherwise known as political “outgroups” (Iyengar and Westwood 2015: 691; Iyengar et al. 2019; Pew Research Center 2016).² Such biases occur implicitly and on the singular basis of party identification regardless of underlying ideology or issue positioning (Iyengar and Westwood 2015). Given the established role of social and cultural fit in determining employability in firms (Rivera 2012b; Rivera and Tilcsik 2016; Stinchcombe 1965; Sørensen and Kalleberg 1981), the rise of affective polarization suggests that political fit might also predict employability in firms and change over time. Yet, to determine this question presupposes the existence of partisan polarization, particularly increased within-firm partisan homogeneity and increased between-firm partisan distinctiveness. In this paper, I therefore ask, *to what extent has party sorting or partisan polarization emerged in the American corporation?*

Understanding the extent of partisan polarization in the American corporation has implications for the entrenchment of partisanship in American politics, a point perhaps clearer after establishing the following ideas. First, corporations increasingly fund national elections, both through corporate political action committees and secondarily by the individuals whose income and wealth originates in firms and flows to political committees (Domhoff 2010; Hacker and Pierson 2010; Mayer 2016; Page et al. 2013). Second, these campaign funds foster the election of “party elites,” who have become increasingly polarized on political issues (McCarty et al. 2006), a process believed to contribute to increased partisan polarization or party sorting and affective polarization of the American voter (Hetherington 2001; Iyengar and Westwood 2015; Pew Research Center 2016). Therefore, given these points, better understanding how the corporation, a type of complex organization, may serve not only as an economic engine of partisanship—but instead might additionally act as *a socializing*

²Affective polarization is the most common term in scientific literature (Iyengar and Westwood 2015; Iyengar et al. 2019), but the behavior is occasionally referred to as “negative partisanship” (Klein 2020; Pew Research Center 2016).

mechanism entrenching partisanship in the American labor force and perhaps physically isolating them from opposing partisans, necessitates a new social, organizational approach toward understanding partisanship in American politics. While the effects of within-firm partisanship could be as simple as determining who a firm hires or promotes based on party allegiance, documenting such effects requires establishing the emergence and existence of *partisan polarization in the American firm*.

In this paper, I develop the idea of *partisan polarization or party sorting in the American firm*, which I will alternatively refer to as *organizational partisanship*. Organizational partisanship affords a unique perspective, whereby we can assess the idea of corporate identity or firm actorhood (Bromley and Sharkey 2017; King et al. 2010)—not as the result of official corporate documents or position-taking—but instead as the collective manifestation of corporate culture that can evolve from changes of the employees therein, including those at the executive, managerial, and lower levels.³ In this way, we can evaluate the emergence of firms as political incubators, a phenomenon that develops relationally within firms such that the partisan firm emerges from individuals’ importation or “transposition” of external cultural frameworks, routines, and social networks, especially those bearing partisanship (Clemens 1993; Davis et al. 2008; Powell and Sandholtz 2012; Powell et al. 2005). Such transposition may manifest in a variety of ways, such as self-conscious selection into or departure from firms, direct selection of those politically matching the firm’s political identity, or indirect correlation of cultural attributes associated with partisan affiliation. Regardless of

³Here, we can think both of changes in the given fixed set of persistent employees as well as changes in the human capital allocation of firms, which as mentioned thereafter, can have roots in employees’ importation of myriad external social and cultural frameworks, routines, preferences, or attitudes, among other possibilities (Clemens 1993; Davis et al. 2008; Powell and Sandholtz 2012; Powell et al. 2005). This prospect is additionally discussed in Chapter 1, and specifically relates to the idea that organizations can evolve such that organizational structure follows its strategy, of which human capital allocation and the attributes thereof are an integral component (Chandler 1962), (*c.f.* Hannan and Freeman 1984; Stinchcombe 1965). Consequently, changes in human capital allocation or attributes of this human capital, for example, from the importation of external societal frameworks (Clemens 1993; Powell and Sandholtz 2012; Powell et al. 2005), constitute a change in organizational strategy, the structure that follows, and as such, constitute a change in the organizational state. I reference this idea also in (Chapter 1, footnotes 1 and 22), and provide a deeper level of organizational theory on this concept in Appendix A.

the presentation of organizational partisanship, we can harness the idea of the firm emerging as a political actor when the composition of its members reaches a threshold of political coherence discrete from former epochs, for example, a higher degree of within-firm partisan homogeneity as opposed to past periods of relative bipartisanship.⁴

To test my theory of the emergence of organizational partisanship as defined by its employees' partisanship, I analyze the individual campaign contributions of employees at Fortune 400 companies between 1980 and 2018. Therein, I focus on two primary analytic questions, namely whether there has been an increase in partisan polarization within firms over time, and second, whether we can identify the emergence of particular firm types that exhibit strong partisan polarization. Such analysis reveals that partisan polarization has increased from 1980 to 2018, particularly since the 2012 presidential election. Such a trend occurs not only for corporate executives but for employees at all levels. Both the magnitude and directionality of these changes is unequal. Using hierarchical clustering analysis, I identify three types of emergent partisan firms, including polarized Democratic, polarized Republican, and amphibious firms, the latter of which alternate between weak Democratic and Republican states. Of these changes, the most marked changes occur in the bolstering of partisan Democratic and Republican firms.

Collectively, this study expands organizational theories of firm actorhood (Bromley and Sharkey 2017; King et al. 2010), by illustrating that beyond the emergence of new organizational structural or strategic forms (Powell and Sandholtz 2012; Powell et al. 2005), firms can have emergent partisan identities reflective of shifting partisan dynamics of the employees therein. This latter finding of increased party sorting contributes to the literature on party sorting (Baldassarri and Bearman 2007; Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; Baldassarri

⁴Note that defined this way, there could be a decoupling (*c.f.* Meyer and Rowan 1977), from the formal organizational partisanship, as defined by official corporate documents or corporate political action committees (PACs), and the informal organizational partisanship defined from partisanship of a firm's actor members, that is, its employees. Here, I am interested in firm partisanship as defined by its employees. To take an analog in political ideology, Bonica (2016) demonstrates that the ideology of a firm's board members is discrete from the ideology of its corporate PACs.

and Goldberg 2014; Fiorina and Abrams 2008), and suggests additional work exploring workplace and career effects of partisanship, particularly affective polarization (Iyengar and Westwood 2015; Iyengar et al. 2019). Empirically, the paper proves to be among the first to quantitatively and computationally assess the degree of partisanship among individuals in American corporations. Such an exercise illuminates several theoretical mediums, both in the study of partisanship as well as in underscoring how organizations can emerge as political actors through the increased salience of expressed public partisanship in the workplace.

2.1 Organizational and Individual Partisanship

2.1.1 Organizations as Political Actors and the Importance of Individuals

Understanding the emergence of organizational partisanship warrants some background on the concept of the organization as a social actor, also known as firm actorhood. Consideration of firms or organizations as performing action or existing as “actors” has increased in organizational research (Bromley and Sharkey 2017; King et al. 2010; Meyer 2010). Three important dimensions of an organization as a social actor include sovereignty, capacity for purposive action, and identity (Bromley and Sharkey 2017; King et al. 2010; Meyer and Bromley 2013), where *identity* forms the common thread bolstering the latter faculties. Quite simply, “purposive action. . . is guided by identity” (Bromley and Sharkey 2017: 6), and it reflects an organization’s ability to perform tasks “on a scale and in a manner. . . unattainable by any given individual” (King et al. 2010: 298). The authority to perform these actions indicates organizational sovereignty.

The quiddity of organizational *identity* perhaps should elicit little surprise. Indeed, from an organizational vantage, a basic tenet is that in order to be hired, maintain employment, or advance in an organization, individuals must “be socialized, careers molded, and power allocated to defend the value” (Stinchcombe 1965: 167), in other words align with the

company's identity as constituted by its core values (Chandler 1962; Hannan and Freeman 1977, 1984). Of course, these topics prove increasingly relevant with respect to the research question of partisanship. If an organization maintains the right to determine its members and regulate their activity (King et al. 2010: 293), as guided by their alignment with organizational identity or more generally culture (Goldberg et al. 2016; Stinchcombe 1965), such capacities manifest sovereignty, purposive action, and identity, thereby reiterating that the organization serves as a social actor. Where such identity and action is guided by politics, I additionally posit that beyond simply engaging as a social actor, the organization can also be conceived as a political actor.

What is important to recall from this discussion, is that firms can emerge as political actors not necessarily through purposive policy, but rather, when the political identity of a firm or its culture, becomes such that it informs subsequent sovereign actions curating its human capital. Throughout this process, individuals remain integral to the constitution of organizations (Meyer 2010; Meyer and Bromley 2013). As Meyer (2010) writes, "organizations... are now conceived as actors derived from their individual actor members" (Meyer 2010:2), where individuals' associations exemplify "highly participatory structures... [having] the qualities of purposive actorhood" (Brunsson and Sahlin-Andersson 2000; Meyer and Bromley 2013:377). Thus, to understand how organizations emerge as political actors, we need to better understand how their political identities can be shaped by the political identity of the individuals therein.

2.1.2 Understanding the Theoretical Basis of Individual Partisanship

To understand the political behavior of individuals, we need to first clarify individuals' modes of political understanding and action, including how they construct partisan identity versus ideology, and how allegiance to these political bases might engender behavior that regulates the manifested political identity or culture of organizations. The idea of political partisanship is directly related to the concept of political parties, and more importantly, identification with

a political party (Campbell et al. 1960).⁵ As Campbell et al. (1960) argued, average citizens lacked the knowledge about political candidates to allocate votes on the basis of individual “class location or other social attributes,” and instead relied on their socially inherited and reinforced party identifications—which are “inherited in childhood and reinforced in adulthood” to make judgements in casting their votes (Campbell et al. 1960; Manza and Brooks 1999:14–15). According to Campbell and colleagues, parties are influential in many ways, including shaping policy positions and partisan attitudes (Campbell et al. 1960:128).

The stability of American party identification is widely noted. Many scholars quote and expand upon Campbell’s insight (Goren et al. 2009; Johnston 2006). Goren et al. (2009) write that “party identification represents the most stable and influential political predisposition in the belief systems of ordinary citizens” (805). Many studies reaffirm the influence of party and partisan behavior across myriad political dimensions including voter behavior and voter choice, political perceptions, candidate evaluations, political value support, and policy attitudes, among other factors (Bartels 2000, 2002; Goren 2002; Goren et al. 2009; Green and Palmquist 1990; Layman and Carsey 2002). In essence, party identification is not determined or constrained—that is, bound together—by political values or political ideology, but rather *party identification guides the ideological development of those beliefs and values* (Barber and Pope 2019; Goren 2005; Goren et al. 2009).

2.1.3 Connecting Party Identity to Partisan Polarization

The fact that party identity shapes ideology has important implications for *partisan polarization*, which is distinguished from political polarization. Although colloquial definitions of polarization simply refer to acutely divided and opposed groups (Fiorina and Abrams 2008), in political science, polarization has a technical definition, which in the most robust valence, is a concept established through “spatial theory” (Lee 2015:263). As Poole and

⁵I use party identification or the party with which an individual identifies as exchangeable terms.

Rosenthal (1997) write, “for parties to be polarized, they must be far apart on policy issues, and the party members must be tightly clustered around the party mean” (81). Thus, polarization in the classical sense is a largely *ideological* phenomenon based on the distribution of policy preferences within parties. As opposed to political polarization, partisan polarization, alternatively referred to as party sorting, can be defined as “the emergence of more internally cohesive, strongly differentiated parties,” or the state that exists following such a process (Fiorina and Abrams 2008; Lee 2015:267). Although political and partisan polarization are not equivalent, the phenomena are related. For example, despite ideological stability and diversity among ordinary citizens (DiMaggio et al. 1996), or the evidence of ideological heterogeneity within corporate boards and across firms (Bonica 2014, 2016), there has been rising ideological polarization among party elites since the 1970s (McCarty et al. 2006). This fact contributes to increased *partisan polarization* of the masses (Hetherington 2001), and in some cases, increased ideological alignment within parties (Baldassarri and Goldberg 2014; Bertrand and Kamenica 2018).⁶

The amplification of partisan polarization in America has important implications. For example, in American society, scholars argue that increased partisan polarization has had a sorting effect on individual citizens (Baldassarri and Bearman 2007; Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; Baldassarri and Goldberg 2014). We must, therefore, consider not only how partisan attitudes align within interpersonal networks but also how partisan divergence evolves in broader social networks (Baldassarri and Bearman 2007; Baldassarri and Goldberg 2014). In social networks and online communities, we see increasingly distinct networks of party members (Koger et al. 2009), and increasing partisan segregation (An et al. 2014; Bello and Rolfe 2014). Therefore, it is not simply that individuals are clarifying their party identification, but also that this phenomenon spreads beyond the individual to affect the social groups we associate with and more importantly *those we do not*.

⁶For example, Bertrand and Kamenica (2018) document that “liberals and conservatives are more different today in their social attitudes than they have ever been in the last 40 years” (38), although as Baldassarri and Goldberg (2014) note, increasing issue alignment is strongest among “ideologues” versus “alternatives” (45).

Thus, these increases in societal partisan polarization relate to a parallel phenomenon known as *affective polarization*, which scholars define as “the tendency of people identifying as Republicans or Democrats to view opposing partisans negatively and copartisans positively” (Iyengar and Westwood 2015:691). The work by Iyengar and Westwood (2015) extends research exemplifying escalating affective polarization, notably acute increases in “negative views of the out party and its supporters... since the 1980s” (Campbell et al. 1960; Green et al. 2002; Iyengar and Westwood 2015:691; Iyengar et al. 2012). Critical to this analysis, affective polarization delimits individual attitudes and behavior such that individuals not only hold animosity toward opposing party members but also view them as less intelligent (Pew Research Center 2016). In fact, the bias based on affective polarization toward political out-groups “exceeds discrimination based on race” (Iyengar and Westwood 2015:690). Given the well-known examples of racial discrimination in labor markets (Bertrand and Mullainathan 2001; Gaddis 2015; Kang et al. 2016; Pager 2003), the findings on affective polarization portend a parallel process of partisan discrimination in labor markets also exists.

This supposition is further supported by the fact that affective polarization arguably silences political dissent in the workplace for fear of conflict, stigma, or termination (Cowan and Baldassarri 2018; Goldberg et al. 2016; Iyengar and Westwood 2015).⁷ Beyond partisan biases around the office, these effects extend to firm leadership, where both pay and evaluations of general competency are linked to the partisanship of executives and board members (Cheng and Groysberg 2016; Gupta and Wowak 2017). At times, board members may even avoid conducting business across party lines (Stark and Vedres 2012). Taken together, if partisanship can influence business strategy and affect the perceived suitability of executives, we might also expect that partisanship, especially affective polarization, might also influence the political composition of firm employees on a larger scale. If such a phenomenon were systemic, it

⁷Goldberg et al. (2016) for example, discuss the significantly higher likelihood of “involuntarily exit” if an individual lacks “cultural fit,” particularly if they are “disembedded” (1204-6). Arguably, we can see examples of this in modern firms, for example, the case of a Google employee who claimed his termination was the result of being an outspoken conservative (Copeland 2019; McCabe 2019).

should ultimately appear in changes in the partisan composition of firm employees. As the partisan composition of firms becomes more homogenous, the partisan polarization of that firm increases.

2.1.4 The Emergence of Organizational Partisanship

Therefore, as suggested by general societal changes in partisan polarization and affective polarization, organizations themselves may evidence partisan polarization as a result of shifting partisan attachments of individuals within firms. An aggregate shift in the individual partisan attachments of firm employees, recall, constitutes the emergence of a firm as a political actor, since organizations are “derived from their individual actor members” (Meyer 2010:2), whose membership is participatory, regulated, and helps shape organizational identity (Bromley and Sharkey 2017; Brunsson and Sahlin-Andersson 2000; King et al. 2010; Meyer and Bromley 2013).

If firm actorhood or political identity can emerge from rising partisan sorting in firms as defined by the public partisan identities of its members, such a state points to the possibility of decoupling between the identity of a firm through its actor members and the firm’s political identity as characterized by formal corporate measures such as public position taking, corporate lobbying, or firm-level political action committee (PAC) behavior. At the same time, the theoretical possibility of decoupling helps to highlight mechanisms whereby partisan polarization can emerge at the organizational level, particularly through related concepts of organizational routines, myths, ceremonies, and repertoires.

In many ways, the concepts of myths and ceremonies discussed by Meyer and Rowan (1977) relate to and illuminate the routinized process of institutionalization buttressing formal organizational structure. The existence of routines is substantiated by myth and ceremony—whose origins are grounded in rational efficiency which exists in theory but not

practice (March and Simon 1958; Meyer and Rowan 1977).⁸ Inefficiencies emerge from the inertia created, in part, from these “rationalized myths,” ceremonies, routines, or habitualized actions that prevail even after they are no longer efficient (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Hannan and Freeman 1984; Meyer and Rowan 1977; Stinchcombe 1965). In fact, a second purpose of these informal structures is to account for discontinuities or “decoupling” between expressed formal structure and lines of authority, and daily enacted practice, a divide between the formal and informal structure (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Therefore, the potential political decoupling between formal organization and informal everyday members can be partly explained by the informal daily practices of the firm.

Although routines, myths, and ceremony help capture informal structure, the concept of “organizational repertoires” might also be applied (Clemens 1993). The term “organizational repertoires” refers to “the set of organizational models that are culturally or experientially available” (Clemens 1993:758). Although organizational models may refer to “examples of specific organizations” and their external actions as “governed by ‘logics of appropriateness’...or institutional norms” (Clemens 1993:758; DiMaggio and Powell 1983; March and Olsen 1989:23–24), organizational models may also refer to the “templates for arranging relationships within an organization and sets of scripts for action” (Clemens 1993:758). It is this second definition of organizational models as templates or scripts within an organization that best reflects my application of the term to internal organizational processes. The concept of organizational repertoires also captures Hannan and Freeman’s (1984) argument that as part of the institutionalization process, organizations not only have routines but “sets of routines” and a “set of rules to switch between routines” (154). In sum, such sets of routines coalesce as “organizational memory” or as Hannan and Freeman (1984) define, “an organization’s repertoire of routines... the set of collective actions that it can do from memory” (154; *c.f.* Nelson and Winter 1982).

⁸For example, Meyer and Rowan’s (1977) “rationalized myths” in organizational structures can trace their roots to economic rationality and exemplify a decoupling between formal and informal structure (343, 347).

Critically, the malleability of repertoires lends itself to transfiguration not simply from experiential histories (Berger and Luckmann 1966), but also from a “common, culturally available repertoire” for situational interpretation and action (Clemens 1993:759). In this way, the informal social structure of organizations may shift according to changing currents of societal understanding such as societal changes in partisanship or attitudes toward opposing partisan groups. If organizational repertoires are malleable to societal influence, and such organizational repertoires include hiring and promotional processes—especially the *suitability* of an individual within an organization—then the political identity of a firm and the status of firms as political actors might also shift or emerge in response to societal changes in political partisanship, such as party sorting or affective polarization.

Connecting this discussion to the broader emergence literature, we can see that “emergence is fundamentally relational,” that is, new organizational forms or identities often emerge and owe a great deal to “social forces of juxtaposition,” whereby intersecting social networks, ideas, culture, or repertoires recombine to result in the development of innovation such as new organizational forms, identities, or practice (Padgett and McLean 2006; Powell and Sandholtz 2012:95; Powell et al. 2005). More generally, emergence can transpire when societal, and in the case of this analysis, *political* shifts “exert pressure on existing relations and reconfigure models of action” (Powell et al. 2005:1134). Organizationally, emergence can, therefore, transpire under conditions where sociopolitical influence affects the repertoires of individual firm-actors. Since I focus on changes within specific firms, the type of emergence that occurs can be thought of as political recombination. Rather than the creation of a new firm, a firm’s political identity reconfigures through the utilization of extant routines, which are influenced by the transposition of external “cognitive frameworks and moral assumptions” about their partisan identities and attitudes toward opposing versus copartisans (Iyengar and Westwood 2015; Powell and Sandholtz 2012:96). Collectively, in this paper, I advance the idea that an organization can emerge as a political actor as defined by shifts in political partisanship of its members. In so doing, I build on a number of literatures, including

those in partisan polarization (Baldassarri and Bearman 2007; Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; Baldassarri and Goldberg 2014), firm actorhood (Bromley and Sharkey 2017; King et al. 2010; Meyer and Bromley 2013), and organizational emergence (Powell and Sandholtz 2012; Powell et al. 2005).

2.2 Data Sources and Preprocessing

2.2.1 Data Sources of Individual Partisanship and Occupation

Data for this project comes from the United States Federal Election Commission (FEC), a government regulatory agency that extensively documents the financial activity of elections (Federal Election Commission 2018a). Among these financial activities, Chin et al. (2013) note, “the FEC records all individual contributions of more than \$200 to individual candidates; to campaign committees for federal office; to national, state, and local parties; and to political action committees (PACs)” (207). According to the FEC, “for each contribution that exceeds \$200, either by itself or when added to the contributor’s previous contributions made during the same calendar year, records must identify that contribution by: Amount; Date of receipt; and Contributor’s full name and mailing address, occupation and employer” (Federal Election Commission 2018c).⁹ And even where an individual has no prior contribution history and gives only a small donation of a few dollars, committees collect this data (Appendix B, Table B.10). Of course, given the above definition, we would not have information on individuals either contributing less than the \$200 calendar-year, aggregate threshold, nor would we have data on the “dark money” that circumnavigates legally reportable contributions to political committees (Mayer 2016). Nonetheless, the FEC data proves a valuable public resource, and given the relevance of the data to myriad research questions, it has been used to various ends, including research on corporate social responsibility (Chin et al. 2013; Gupta et al. 2017),

⁹Although the FEC collects addresses, this data is not provided in the bulk downloads, therefore making the aggregation of individuals through names more challenging.

CEO pay (Gupta and Wowak 2017), or political ideology of corporations and executives (Bonica 2016), among other studies.¹⁰ To clarify the data scope, although the FEC documents a variety of campaign finance data, I specifically focus on contributions made by individuals, not by firms or corporate political action committees. Because individuals can contribute to a firm’s PAC (or any other political action committee), such individual-level contribution data is included in the analysis.

Although the mode for accessing and exploring the data varies, traditional routes include either directly downloading data from the FEC or from third-party sites such as the Center for Responsive Politics (Center for Responsive Politics 2020), (*c.f.* Bonica 2013; Chin et al. 2013). Such data, which originates from the FEC, however, may be limited in the details included, completeness, or level of aggregation. For this project, I downloaded and utilized data tables directly available from the FEC (Federal Election Commission 2018a, 2018b).¹¹ Structurally, the FEC data exists as a series of pipe-delimited text files for each data table-election-cycle pair. For example, there is a file for political candidates in 2012, a file for political candidates in 2014, and so forth. Other notable tables include data on individual contributions, data on the political committees to which individuals contribute, and data about where these political committees transfer funds. The resulting dataset is large by traditional social science standards. In Table 2.1, I detail the data’s metadata characteristics.

¹⁰Although most campaign contributions have an ideological component (McCarty et al. 2006), as I previously argue, *party identification structures ideology* (Barber and Pope 2019; Goren 2005; Goren et al. 2009), and within parties there exists significant ideological heterogeneity (Bonica 2014, 2016; McCarty et al. 2006). For example, McCarty et al. (2006) write, “there is always substantial diversity of NOMINATE positions [ideological scores] within each party and, at times, ideological overlap between the parties” (21). Thus, when members of the public contribute to a political candidate or committee, it better reflects an alignment of individual and candidate partisan identity than an exact match of the individual’s and the candidate’s political ideology on a range of issues, in which most voters are not well versed (Campbell et al. 1960).

¹¹Federal Election Commission (2018a) contains the FEC’s data repository for all bulk downloads, whereas the second page Federal Election Commission (2018b) contains a more user-friendly interface with detailed documentation and data links to Federal Election Commission (2018a). Besides the bulk downloads, the FEC’s page also offers various aggregations of data. In addition, FEC also has an official API, OpenFEC (General Services Administration: 18F 2017), whose documentation is available online: <https://api.open.fec.gov/developers/>. API refers to “Automated Programming Interface,” which is a way for organizational entities to provide structured access to large databases. In testing, the FEC’s API may have some issues with the results returned via the data queries.

Table 2.1: Descriptive Overview of FEC Data Tables

FEC Table Name	File Abbreviation	Total Observations (N)	Years Covered
Committees	CM	218,482	1980-2018
Candidates	CN	95,807	1980-2018
Linkages	CCL	50,775	2000-2018
Itemized Records	OTH	9,584,743	1980-2018
Contributions to Candidates	PAS2	5,122,434	1980-2018
Individual Contributions	INDIV	54,314,410	1980-2018
Operating Expenditures	OPPEXP	10,677,840	2004-2018

Source: FEC 2018a, 2018b.

Notes: The FEC has a unique pipe-delimited text file for each of the above file types for each election cycle, in the cycles they exist. The above summary metrics reflect the aggregated totals of each file type (for each election cycle) uploaded into a single SQLite table for each file type. A detailed description of each FEC table type is available at FEC 2018b. In brief: (CM): The committee master file has a single record for each registered FEC committee, which "includes federal political action committees and party committees, campaign committees for presidential, house and senate candidates, as well as groups or organizations who are spending money for or against candidates for federal office." (CN): The candidate master table "contains one record for each candidate who has either registered with the Federal Election Commission or appeared on a ballot list prepared by a state elections office." (CCL): The candidate-committee linkage file has one record for each candidate to committee linkage. (OTH): The itemized records table documents all federal transactions between registered FEC committees, including among other transactions, committee contributions, PAC contributions, and party transfers. This is the file used to recursively identify the partisanship of every itemized contribution. (PAS2): A subset of itemized records (OTH) including only contributions to candidates. (INDIV): A file recording "each contribution from an individual to a federal committee." (OPPEXP): A file containing operational expenditures reported as disbursements.

2.2.2 Defining Firms and Time Periods

In this analysis, I evaluate data specific to Fortune 400 companies. Here, the term Fortune 400 refers to companies that had a rank within the top 400 of the Fortune 1000 companies in 2018 (Fortune 2018).¹² This defined the initial firm sampling frame. Each company in the Fortune 400 (as defined in 2018)¹³ was queried for several years corresponding to each election cycle from 1980 to 2018. Here, the election cycle is calculated from the date of the individual contribution, where the ending two-year period defines the election cycle. For example, data in the 2016 election cycle includes contributions made in 2015 and 2016. Below, I summarize the steps I took to download, identify, and process this data.

¹²The Fortune 1000 is a list compiled by Fortune (2018). Note that this list is a superset of the list referred to as the "Fortune 500." Indeed, the list compiled by Fortune having 1000 companies, even has the designation of "Fortune 500" in its title.

¹³Although the Fortune 1000 list changes each year, there is considerable retention. For example, among the 371 companies for which I found corresponding FEC data, 202 of these companies also had data from the 1980 election cycle (Table B.2).

2.2.3 Data Preprocessing

To obtain and prepare the data, I first developed a series of *Python* and *SQL* scripts to download, extract, transform, and load the FEC data into a *SQLite* database. Such a process is often denoted a data pipeline or an ETL process (extract, transform, load), reflecting at its core the idea of data replicability, in that any scholar can replicate or update the FEC dataset used in the analysis simply by downloading and running the code repository I developed to prepare the FEC data, which I have made available online (Mausolf 2020e). I describe an overview of the ETL pipeline in Figure 2.1.

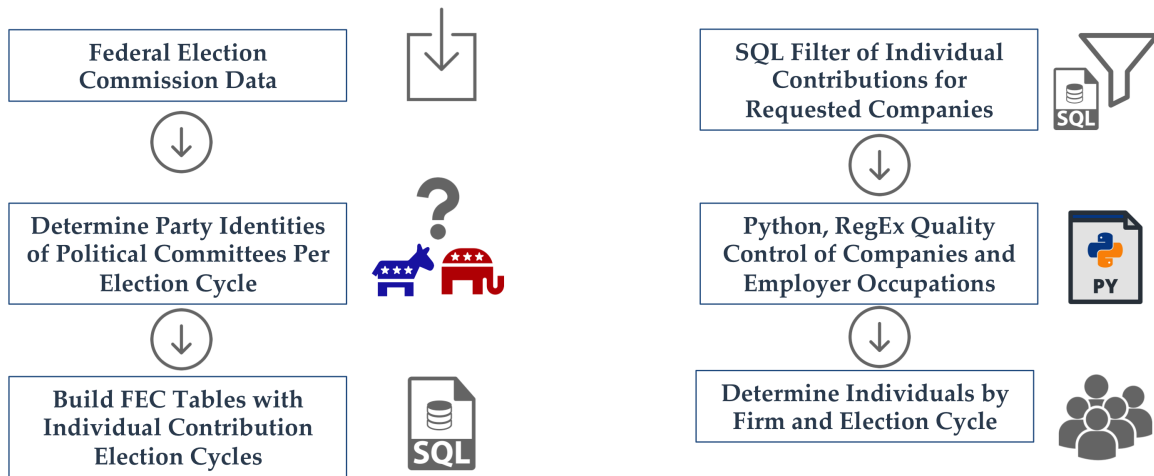


Figure 2.1: ETL Pipeline in Python and SQL

Notes: ETL (extract, transform, load) is a reproducible, code-based pipeline in database engineering. The above graphic represents major conceptual steps in that process, including downloading the data from the FEC (2018a) and building base tables, determining partisanship through a recursive algorithm (Figure 2.2), building FEC individual contribution tables linked to partisanship measures, filtering the data for requested firms, cleaning up and classifying this raw text data with regular expressions, and aggregating individual contributions to individuals by firm by election cycle.

2.2.4 Determining the Partisanship of Political Contributions

As the first stage of the ETL process, I calculate two base, correlated measures of political partisanship, which I term, the *partisan affiliation* (party id) and the *partisan score*. Although I formally define these below, the *partisan affiliation* can be thought of as the most common

major party affiliation, whereas the *partisan score* is the numerical average of the major parties on a scale of -1 to 1. Thus, during the first stage of the ETL process, the partisan affiliation and partisan score are determined for each political committee in every election cycle. In each of these cycles, a recursive algorithm evaluates the partisanship of a given political committee by examining each committee’s itemized contributions to other political committees. The algorithm searches each committee as illustrated in Figure 2.2.

Determining the Partisan Profile of a Political Committee

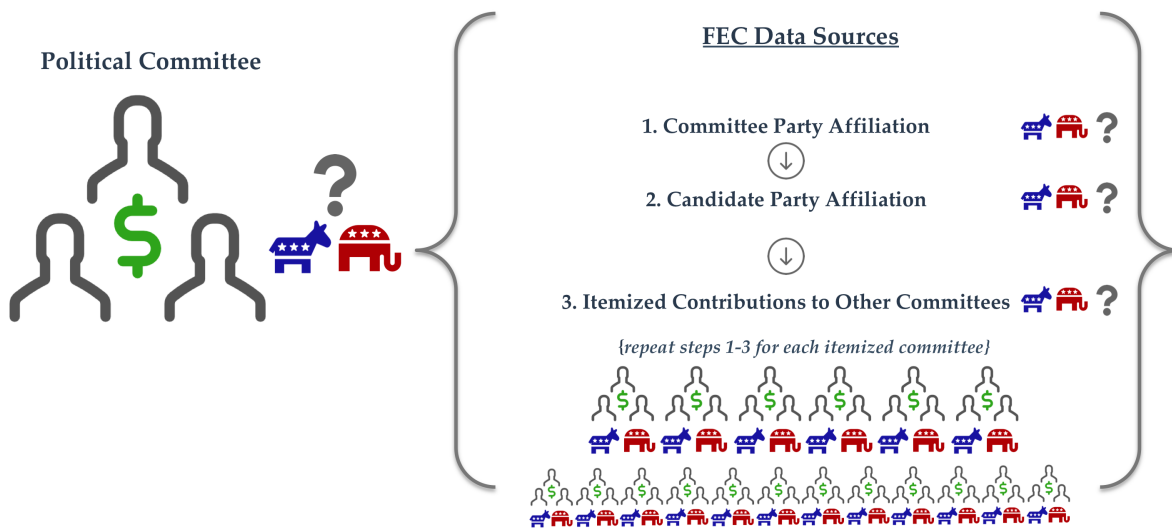


Figure 2.2: Recursive Identification of Partisanship from Itemized Contributions

Notes: This figure conceptually captures the question of determining political partisanship of an individual contribution using the recursive algorithm. For a given contribution to a political committee, that committee ID is queried in the itemized contributions table for that election cycle, resulting in a list of all committee IDs to which that committee provided a federal transfer of funds, which could include candidates or other committees. The partisanship for each committee is examined by querying committee and candidate tables, and if needed the itemized records, to a depth of two. This data is summarized and the process repeats for every political committee in every election cycle, 1980-2018.

To elaborate on the process in Figure 2.2, each political committee is (1) first checked for an available major party or major third-party affiliation.¹⁴ If none is found, (2) the affiliated political candidate (if any) is evaluated for a valid major party. Whether a valid major party is found in steps (1) or (2), an itemized search of the committee’s contributions is performed (3). In this way, the two measures, *party affiliation* and *partisan score*, can be calculated using all committee contributions. I should note that, because the algorithm is recursive,

¹⁴Valid major parties include the following: DEM/Democrat, IND/Independent, and REP/Republican. Major third-parties include the following: GRE/Green, LIB/Libertarian, and CON/Constitution.

the depth of recursion is limited to two levels in order to prevent an infinite loop. In this way, the most important contributions for signaling partisanship are the most immediate first-level contributions, followed by those at the second level. Accordingly, in order to give the most weight to first-level contributions, second-level itemized results are first summarized to capture the most common party affiliation. Thereafter, the collapsed first level can be evaluated to determine the most-frequent party affiliation for that political committee.¹⁵ Lastly, the collapsed first-level parties are converted into numerical equivalencies on a -1 (DEM) to 1 (REP) scale for all major parties and major third parties. Once the numerical values are applied, the mean is computed, less null values.

Table 2.2: Example Multilevel Partisan Results of Recursive Search

Committee ID	Election Cycle	First Level Results			Second Level Results
		(1)	(2)	(3)	Steps 1-3 Results (for each UNK)
C00000000X	2008	UNK	NA	DEM, DEM, DEM, DEM, DEM, DEM, DEM, IND, DEM, UNK	UNK: {DEM, DEM, IND, REP, REP, REP, REP, REP, REP, REP}
C00000001X	2008	NA	NA	REP, REP, REP, UNK, UNK, UNK	UNK:{REP, REP, REP}, UNK:{UNK, UNK, UNK, REP, REP, REP, REP}, UNK:{DEM, IND, REP, IND, IND}

Notes: The value (NA) represents missing data as opposed to the explicitly designated unknown party (UNK). The recursive search process is typically not brief as in the examples above. For example, many committees have hundreds—if not thousands—of itemized contributions, a number of which are unknown, requiring additional itemized searches for each unknown committee.

Following the calculation of the mean using the numerical conversions for major parties and major third parties,¹⁶ the second-level itemized contributions can be resolved to their

¹⁵The most frequent party affiliation is simply the party-string occurring most frequently. If two discrete, non-null parties are equally common, the result is an alphabetized concatenation of the two words. For example, either list of parties [DEM, DEM, REP, REP] or [REP, REP, DEM, DEM], would result in “DEM_REP” as the party.

¹⁶Major parties are assigned the following scores: DEM/Democrat: -1, IND/Independent: 0, and REP/Republican: 1. Major third parties are given scores equivalent to their closest ideological parallel for major parties as follows: GRE/Green: -1, LIB/Libertarian: 0, and CON/Constitution: 1. All other party

most-frequent party, resulting in updated first-level party affiliations. Thereafter, the most-frequent party affiliation can be determined along with the partisan score resultant of the numerical conversion's mean value. Consider the brief example seen in Table 2.2 and Table 2.3. In Table 2.2, the example political committee C00000000X has an unknown (UNK) committee party affiliation and missing or unavailable data for the candidate party affiliation. Yet, when looking through the first-level itemized contributions to other committees, we see that the committee provided itemized contributions to eight Democratic, one Independent, and one unknown committees or candidates. We would like to also know the partisanship of that remaining first-level unknown itemized contribution. Repeating the process in a second-level analysis of that unknown committee, we find that those itemized contributions went to two Democrats, one Independent, and seven Republicans, meaning that the unknown itemized contribution is overall Republican. When these affiliations are collapsed, we can now see that the committee provided contributions to eight Democrats, one Independent, and one Republican (Table 2.3). Collectively, we can see that the overall partisan affiliation of this committee is Democratic, and by converting these parties to numeric values $[-1, 0, 1]$ from $[\text{DEM}, \text{IND}, \text{REP}]$, we can calculate a mean partisan score of -0.70 . Although this represents only a simple example, the process can indicate both the overall party affiliation best representing the political committee as well as a partisan score indicating the relative strength of that partisanship. Once the code determines the partisan affiliations and scores for each political committee and election cycle, it loads the remaining data tables for each election cycle into the OpenFEC database.

possibilities, including over eighty other valid party codes, the assorted codes for null or unknown party affiliations, and concatenated party ties, are all provided a null value rather than a $[-1/1]$ score. To illustrate this multilevel summarization more clearly, consider the simplistic examples of two political committees' first-level and second-level itemized contributions (Table 2.3). Here, second-level contributions are the itemized contributions for each unknown (UNK) political committee that appears in the initial first-level results (Table 2.2).

Table 2.3: Example Calculated Partisan Affiliation and Score

Committee ID	Election Cycle	Collapsed Affiliations	Converted Scores	Partisan Affiliation	Partisan Score
C00000000X	2008	DEM, DEM, DEM, DEM, DEM, DEM, IND, DEM, REP	-1, -1, -1, -1, -1, -1, -1, 0, -1, 1	DEM	-0.70
C00000001X	2008	REP, REP, REP, REP, REP, IND	1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 0	REP	0.83

Notes: The two-stage summarizing implicitly weights the party affiliations of the unknown (UNK) committees such that only their summary party affiliation is considered where it can be determined as opposed to equally weighting first-level and second-level party affiliations.

2.2.5 Selecting Individual Contributions for Fortune 400 Companies

After determining the partisan affiliations and scores for every political committee in each election cycle from 1980 to 2018, my ETL pipeline joins the partisanship metrics with the individual contribution tables for each election cycle;¹⁷ it subsequently queries and then filters data for the requested Fortune 400 companies,¹⁸ determines an occupational hierarchy of the

¹⁷Information about individual contributions begins in the individual contributions table, which are uniquely identified by a sub_ID, and contain a wealth of information including the individual contributor’s name, employer, occupation, contribution amount, and critically, the political committee ID, to which the contribution is given. Using this committee ID, I joined the individual contribution table with the committee master table (as well as the candidate master table), which provides the party affiliation and partisan score for each contribution. The join is performed on both the committee ID and election cycle so that every individual contribution to a committee reflects an accurate measure of that committee’s partisanship during that election cycle. To avoid creating duplicate entries (known as a cross-join in SQL terms), the data is grouped by the unique contribution identifier, that is, the sub_ID. In this way, the new columns afforded by the join are simply added to the table, the number of observations (individual contributions) pre and post join are equal, and no duplicate sub_IDs exist in either table.

¹⁸Fortune 400 Companies are identified as a multi-step process. The first stage involves a complex SQL query using a greedy search parameter to pull contributions from the individual contribution table where either the employer or occupation column matches the name of the corporation or one of its aliases, for example Google or Alphabet. Depending on the year and contribution committee, employer or occupation information might appear separately in their expected columns or combined in one column or the other. Once greedy SQL matches are identified, they are stored in a temporary table which undergoes subsequent strict filtering that includes a variety of regular expression cleaning methods to standardize text case, remove punctuation and white space, then strictly filters the data such that it must match one of several strict criteria to offer higher confidence that the contribution is from an employee of the requested company. In addition to meeting these strict matching criteria, contributions are excluded which match common anti-aliases for the SQL query. For example, greedy searches for Apple return a variety of possibilities such as Apple Inc, or Apple Software Engineer, but also a number of invalid responses for separate companies such as Apple Bank. Lastly, I remove contributions from individuals who are explicitly not employees. For example, the occupation might state “former Goldman Sachs Associate” or “husband works for Walmart.”

individual contribution,¹⁹ and aggregates the contribution-level data to individuals by firm and election cycle. After completing the ETL pipeline, we are left with some rich descriptive data, as displayed in Table 2.4.

2.3 Analytical Framework, Analyses, and Formal Models

The analytic framework for this paper proceeds from the research questions. First, has there been an increase in partisan polarization across firms? Second, can we identify certain types of firms that emerge exhibiting a high degree of partisan homogeneity? Ostensibly, the analyses in question rely on measuring partisan polarization, particularly partisan homogeneity. Although several methods of measuring polarization exist, a common way to measure partisan polarization or party sorting is to quantify the level of partisan variation or dispersion that exists among individuals within groups, in this case firms.

2.3.1 Measuring Partisan Polarization

Partisan polarization or party sorting can be conceived on several analytic levels deserving a fair amount of nuance. In this analysis, I am particularly concerned with partisan polarization,

¹⁹For the purposes of this analysis, I define an identifiable individual as an employee of a corporation, regardless of rank, job title, or location, who uses the same ostensible name across individual contributions in an election cycle. In either case, by defining individuals this way, I can conceivably identify changes in individual partisanship across election cycles, for example, as an employee progresses in a company, such as a move from a manager to a director or executive. Thus, ignoring occupations or locations in delimiting individuals has benefits. To arrive at the individual-cycle aggregation or grouping process, I used regular expressions to normalize the grouping features, chiefly an individual's name (as well as the master company ID and election cycle). In particular, names were cleaned prior to this aggregation to disambiguate multiple contributions from the same individual using slightly differing permutations of a name, such as extraneous punctuation, white space, character case, middle initials, suffixes, or degrees. In this way, the analysis best represents unique individuals, however, for perhaps obvious reasons, this would combine and collapse any cases where two or more people had the same name in a company and would treat an individual who changed companies and contributed under both companies as discrete people. Because no personally identifying information that could transcend time and location is available, there is not a viable way to discount this possibility, although on the whole, this issue, I suspect, would have a minimal if any impact on the results. For example if we ignored all individuals and occupations and instead aggregated all individual contributions to the firm level, we could still detect the degree to which a firm became more politically homogenous over time.

Table 2.4: Individual Partisans at Fortune 400 Companies, 1980-2018

	1980-2018	1980-1988	1990-1998	2000-2008	2010-2018
Major Party ID					
DEM	197,062 (36)	4,458 (48)	17,191 (41)	55,553 (43)	119,860 (33)
REP	351,279 (64)	4,813 (52)	24,880 (59)	74,171 (57)	247,415 (67)
Unknown	14,132 (3)	523 (5)	1,789 (4)	4,378 (3)	7,442 (2)
Partisan Score					
minimum	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00
median (IQR)	0.16 (-0.52, 0.50)	0.03 (-0.24, 0.65)	0.17 (-0.29, 0.80)	0.12 (-1.00, 0.81)	0.17 (-0.14, 0.42)
mean (sd)	0.05 ± 0.68	0.09 ± 0.64	0.12 ± 0.69	-0.01 ± 0.79	0.06 ± 0.63
maximum	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Unknown	3,212 (1)	170 (2)	420 (1)	888 (1)	1,734 (0)
Individual Contributions					
minimum	1	1	1	1	1
median (IQR)	2.00 (1.00, 8.00)	1.00 (1.00, 2.00)	1.00 (1.00, 2.00)	1.00 (1.00, 2.00)	4.00 (1.00, 13.00)
mean (sd)	6.87 ± 14.67	1.75 ± 1.81	1.85 ± 2.43	2.40 ± 4.21	9.19 ± 17.31
maximum	3057	32	54	109	3057
Firms	336	89	158	279	334
N	562,473	9,794	43,860	134,102	374,717

Source: FEC 2018a, 2018b.

Notes: N = 562,473 (Individuals X Firm X Election Cycle) represents individual-level data aggregated from individual contributions (contribution-level data). Individual contributions detail each contribution sub_ID for all individuals in the requested firms, in each election cycle 1980-2018. Categorical data, such as party identity, reports the number for each cell, followed by a percentage: N (%). As previously noted in the data pipeline, I queried for individual contributions from employees at current Fortune 400 firms using the given company names and firm aliases and subsidiaries, wherein not all companies returned results. Additionally, companies were subsequently filtered for quality control to help ensure only members of that company are represented. As an additional control, a threshold filter of $n = 10$ was set, such that each Firm X Election Cycle must have ≥ 10 individuals with a known major party identity and known partisan score. For comparison, a version of the data without the threshold ($n = 10$) filter is available in the appendix. Because both Fortune 400 firms were defined in present time and because campaign contributions dramatically increase over the past few decades, we see temporal increases in both the number of contributions, the number of individuals by firm by election cycle, and the number of included firms in increasing years. In the appendix, I likewise conduct robustness checks to illustrate that we see similar trends in partisan polarization using only constant 1980 firms.

such that *within a firm*, the partisan balance gravitates toward and is clustered around a singular party identification, namely the Democratic or Republican party.

Such a state could also be characterized as *within-firm partisan homogeneity* which corresponds to *increased between-firm partisan polarization*. As a matter of definitional shorthand, when I refer to polarized Democratic or Republican firms or increased partisan polarization at the firm level, such expressions denote increased partisan homogeneity within firms such that partisanship clusters around one party pole.²⁰ To measure whether a firm

²⁰In other words, we are not interested in the strictest sense in *within-firm partisan polarization*, a state that would be characterized by having both a bimodal distribution of strong partisans, that is both a strong Democratic and a strong Republican faction of partisans within the same firm. This state also is differentiated

has partisan homogeneity or a strong clustering around one of the partisan identities, I used a joint measure using the second, third, and fourth moments, namely, variance, skewness, and kurtosis.²¹ I define this measure as follows:

$$\text{Partisan Polarization} = \left((1 - \text{Var}[X]) \times |\text{Skew}[X]| \times \ln(\text{Kurt}[X] + 10) \right) \quad (2.1)$$

As an illustration of this measure, consider the overall partisan polarization (partisan homogeneity) for two example firms in 2018, Alphabet (Google) and Marathon Petroleum. As we will subsequently see in the analysis, Alphabet can be classified as a polarized Democratic firm whereas Marathon Petroleum can be classified as a polarized Republican firm.

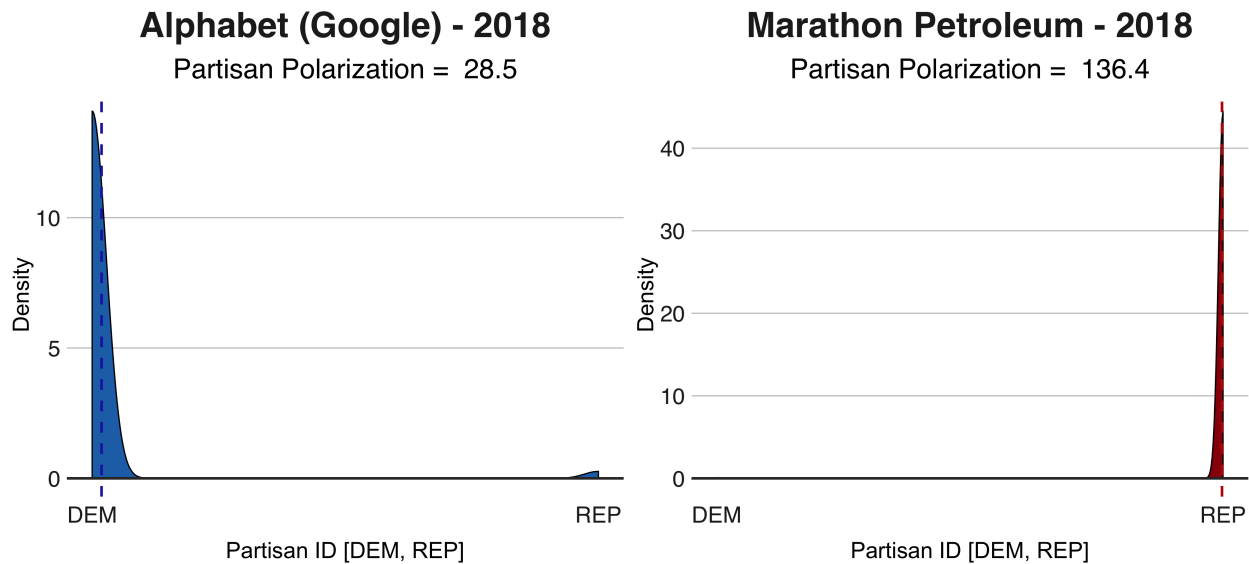


Figure 2.3: Density Distribution of Partisan Identities for Alphabet and Marathon Petroleum in 2018

Notes: Measure of partisan polarization calculated for all employees in 2018 for each company using Equation 2.1.

from a non-polarized bipartisan firm, wherein we see a highly heterogeneous mixture of weaker Democrats and Republicans.

²¹A prior version of this analysis used a simpler measure of polarization using only variance. Although not as many distributional nuances of polarization were captured, the end results were similar.

2.3.2 Within-Firm Differences or Similarities by Occupational Hierarchy

Although these two firms are illustrative of companies with a high degree of partisan polarization (within-firm partisan homogeneity), in the analysis, I take this one step further by not only considering the distribution of partisans within the entire company but also by examining similarity within firms across occupational hierarchies. In this way, we can better state whether partisan polarization is a phenomenon occurring throughout the firm versus simply an artifact of firm executives or board members. Thus, in the analysis, I calculate the partisan polarization measure (and other partisan metrics) by three levels of occupational hierarchy: Executives, which includes both proper executives as well as board members, managers inclusive of both managers and directors, and lastly, all other employees not in the first two leadership groups. Although occupational hierarchy can be determined through the FEC employer and occupation information from 2004 and onwards, election cycles 1980-2002 did not have this information. I therefore also present collective results for all employees in each election cycle 1980-2018.

2.3.3 Dynamic Time Warping Hierarchical Cluster Analysis

In this paper, I seek to illustrate the degree to which firms become more internally homogenous in their partisan expression, and similarly become more differentiated from the partisanship of firms of the opposing party. To classify firms and account for complex temporal dynamics in a variety of partisan measures captured at multiple levels of the occupational hierarchy, I combine several methods to perform what can generally be described as time series clustering. The specific method involves two processes: Dynamic time warping and hierarchical cluster analysis. Of these, hierarchical cluster analysis (HCA) is perhaps most widely known since it has been successfully applied to a number of past sociological studies of organizational emergence and organizational subsets (Laumann and Knoke 1987; Powell and Sandholtz 2012; Ruef 2000). In short, the method, as a form of unsupervised learning, typically utilizes

one of two primary hierarchical clustering algorithms, namely agglomerative hierarchical clustering or divisive hierarchical clustering (Kaufman and Rousseeuw 1990; Martin Maechler and Schubert 2019; Tan and Kumar 2006). Agglomerative hierarchical clustering can proceed using two approaches alternatively referred to as agglomerative nesting (AGNES) or divisive analysis (DIANA). These approaches refer to an unsupervised learning method in which the data is either progressively merged into fewer or divided into a greater number of clusters, K , specified by the user (Kaufman and Rousseeuw 1990: 44). Although HCA algorithms have the ability to cluster data into K clusters using multivariate data across a variety of distance measures and agglomerative or divisive methods, the process does not have an inherent ability to incorporate temporal patterns. This is where dynamic time warping enters the equation. Dynamic time warping distance is a model-free dissimilarity measure which seeks to “find a mapping r between the [time] series so that a specific distance measure between the coupled observations (X_{a_i}, Y_{b_i}) is minimized” (Berndt and Clifford 1994; Montero and Vilar 2014: 5). Unlike many of the time series clustering methods outlined by Montero and Vilar (2014), dynamic time warping has the ability to take a matrix of multivariate time series. Such a feature is important to this analysis since we would like to characterize firms by their temporal patterns across multiple variable spaces. Once the dynamic time warping distance matrix is calculated, we can perform traditional hierarchical clustering analysis, which is the approach used in this study.

2.3.4 Model Evaluation

To determine the optimal method for HCA, one of the initial decisions is to specify the number of clusters, K to be used. A standard method of making this determination—known as the elbow method—is to evaluate the drop-off in additional percentage of variance explained using the total within-cluster sum of squares. Although the algorithm for calculating this metric is not amenable to a dynamic time warping distance matrix, a matrix of model features

can be passed over various temporal periods. Such an analysis reveals that the HCA model gains the most information by using $K = 3$ clusters under a number of discrete temporal periods (Figure 2.4).

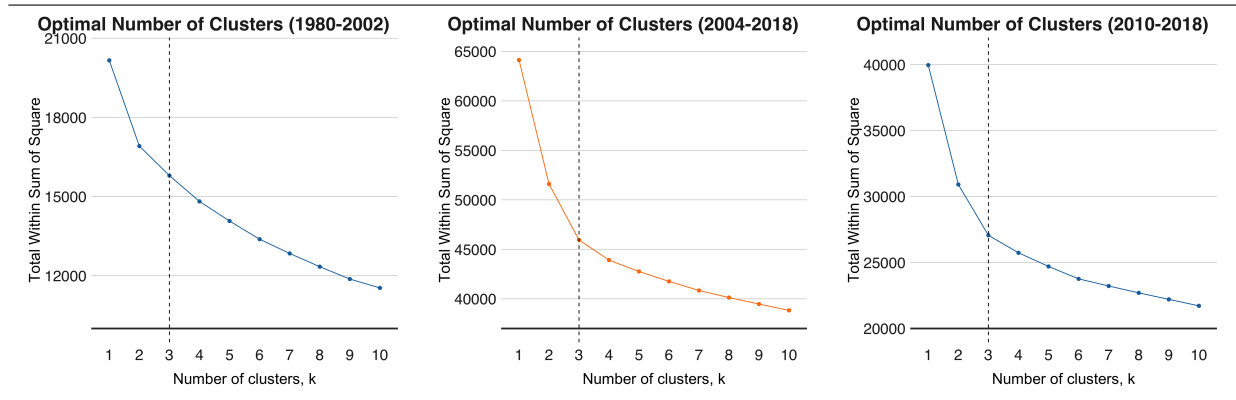


Figure 2.4: HCA Agnes Optimal Number of Clusters, 1980-2018

Notes: Optimal cluster analysis determined using the within cluster sum of squares for three HCA AGNES algorithms performed using Ward’s method for individual-level firm data. The three periods evaluated include 1980-2002, 2004-2018, and 2010-2018. Each graph reveals a drop off in the additional within cluster sum of squares after $K=3$ clusters. AGNES in 2004-2018 has the highest total within cluster sum of squares.

Once I determined $K = 3$ optimal clusters, I tested several feature sets (multivariate time series) on which to calculate the dynamic time warping distance. For simplicity, I will refer to these time series feature sets as models, which included a variety of measures (Table 2.5). In the table, each of the listed model variables occurs by occupational hierarchy, that is, executives, managers, and others. For example, the models include a time-series of the mean-party identity of executives, of managers, and of other employees for every firm, for the years in which that data exists for that firm.

For each of these models, a dynamic time warping distance matrix was calculated, which I used to evaluate a number of possible agglomerative and divisive hierarchical clustering algorithms. Generally, the higher the resulting agglomerative or divisive coefficient, the better the model. In all cases, the AGNES model using Ward’s method provided the hierarchical cluster analysis with the best coefficient (Table 2.6). Because Model 1 and Model 2 had comparable agglomerative coefficients, I selected Model 1, which utilized a greater number of partisan features.

Table 2.5: Dynamic Time Warping Model Variables, 1980-2018

Model 1 (336 x 51 x 20)	Model 2 (336 x 60 x 20)	Model 3 (336 x 30 x 20)
Mean Party ID [DEM, REP]	Mean Party ID [DEM, REP]	Mean Party ID [DEM, REP]
Median Party ID [DEM, REP]	Mean Party ID [DEM, OTH, REP] Median Party ID [DEM, REP] Median Party ID [DEM, OTH, REP]	Mean Party ID [DEM, OTH, REP]
Mean Partisan Score	Mean Partisan Score	Mean Partisan Score
Median Partisan Score	Median Partisan Score	Median Partisan Score
Mean Partisan Score (Mode)	Mean Partisan Score (Mode)	
Mean Partisan Score (Min)	Mean Partisan Score (Min)	
Mean Partisan Score (Max)	Mean Partisan Score (Max)	
	Total Contributions	
Variance Party ID [DEM, REP]	Variance Party ID [DEM, REP]	
Skewness Party ID [DEM, REP]	Skewness Party ID [DEM, REP]	Skewness Party ID [DEM, REP]
LN Kurtosis Party ID [DEM, REP]	LN Kurtosis Party ID [DEM, REP]	
Polarization Party ID Base	Polarization Party ID Base	Polarization Party ID Base
Polarization Party ID [0, 1] Scaled	Polarization Party ID [0, 1] Scaled	Polarization Party ID [0, 1] Scaled
Variance Partisan Score	Variance Partisan Score	
Skewness Partisan Score	Skewness Partisan Score	Skewness Partisan Score
LN Kurtosis Partisan Score	LN Kurtosis Partisan Score	
Polarization Partisan Score Base	Polarization Partisan Score Base	Polarization Partisan Score Base
Polarization Partisan Score [0, 1]	Polarization Partisan Score [0, 1]	Polarization Partisan Score [0, 1]

Notes: N = 336 firms. Each model has maximum possible dimensions of N = 336 Firms by V (model variables by occupational hierarchy) by Y = 20 Election Cycles 1980-2018. Note that each model variable occurs by occupational hierarchy collapsed to three levels such that 1980-2002, all employees are equivalent to others and 2004-2018 others only includes employees not in the executive or manager categories. Because not every firm exists in each year, the number of election cycles or dimensions of the matrix of time series varies. Therein, each univariate time series in the numeric matrix of time series matrices has varying numbers of years, depending on the election cycles in which the variable exists or the firm exists. Before dynamic time warping distance can be calculated, all variables had to be converted to numeric, and null values had to be omitted. Prior to omitting remaining null values, they were propagated using "forward" and "back" filling of features across columns. For example, if a firm was missing a statistic for managers in an election cycle that value could be carried forward from executives or backward from other employees (in the same firm). Additionally, all data was scaled (without mean-centering) prior to final omission of remaining null values.

Table 2.6: Dynamic Time Warping HCA Model Evaluation, 1980-2018

Model, Method	Model Coefficient		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
AGNES, UPGMA	0.656	0.646	0.705
AGNES, WPGMA	0.703	0.688	0.753
AGNES, Single Linkage	0.622	0.608	0.707
AGNES, Complete Linkage	0.807	0.800	0.848
AGNES, Ward's Method	0.921	0.919	0.916
Diana	0.763	0.751	0.819

Source: FEC 2018a, 2018b.

Notes: N = 336 Firms. Based on data from 562,473 (Individuals X Firm X Election Cycle) for 1980-2018. This data represents individual-level data aggregated from individual contributions (contribution-level data). Companies had an inclusion threshold of $n = 10$, such that each Firm X Election Cycle must have ≥ 10 individuals with a known major party ID and known partisan score.

2.4 Analysis

2.4.1 Increasing Partisan Polarization Across Firms?

Returning to the core research question, I ask, *to what extent has party sorting or partisan polarization emerged in the American corporation?* As a first step of analysis, we should consider the temporal changes from 1980 to 2018. Recall, that we are interested not only in whether there has been an overall increase across all individual-level contributions within firms, but also whether we see parallel changes for discrete hierarchical levels of employment. For example, are only executives exemplifying increased party sorting, or are managers and other employees also exhibiting similar changes? Consider the aggregate changes in partisan polarization as well as the total number of individual contributors across the included Fortune 400 firms, Figure 2.5.

Examining the figure, we can see that whether we measure partisan polarization using the party affiliation or the partisan score, although there was a slight decline in within-firm partisan polarization from the 1980s through the 2000s, there have been substantial increases in partisan polarization (political homogeneity) within firms, particularly from 2012 to 2018. In part, the trend of a decline in these measures of partisanship may be explained because we are examining *within-firm* measures of dispersion, such as variance, skew, and kurtosis of partisanship. In the 1980s, not only are fewer firms in the dataset but also most firms only had a handful of individual contributors, and this was likely a self-selected and perhaps more politically homogeneous group of individuals than in later eras. For example, this might have been largely executives, although further exploration would be needed to investigate this question empirically. In either case, as the number of individuals contributing gradually increased, it appears that so, too did the political diversity, at least assuming these new contributors represent a more politically discrete group than those previously contributing. If these assumptions prove true, partisan polarization would appear to decrease because a

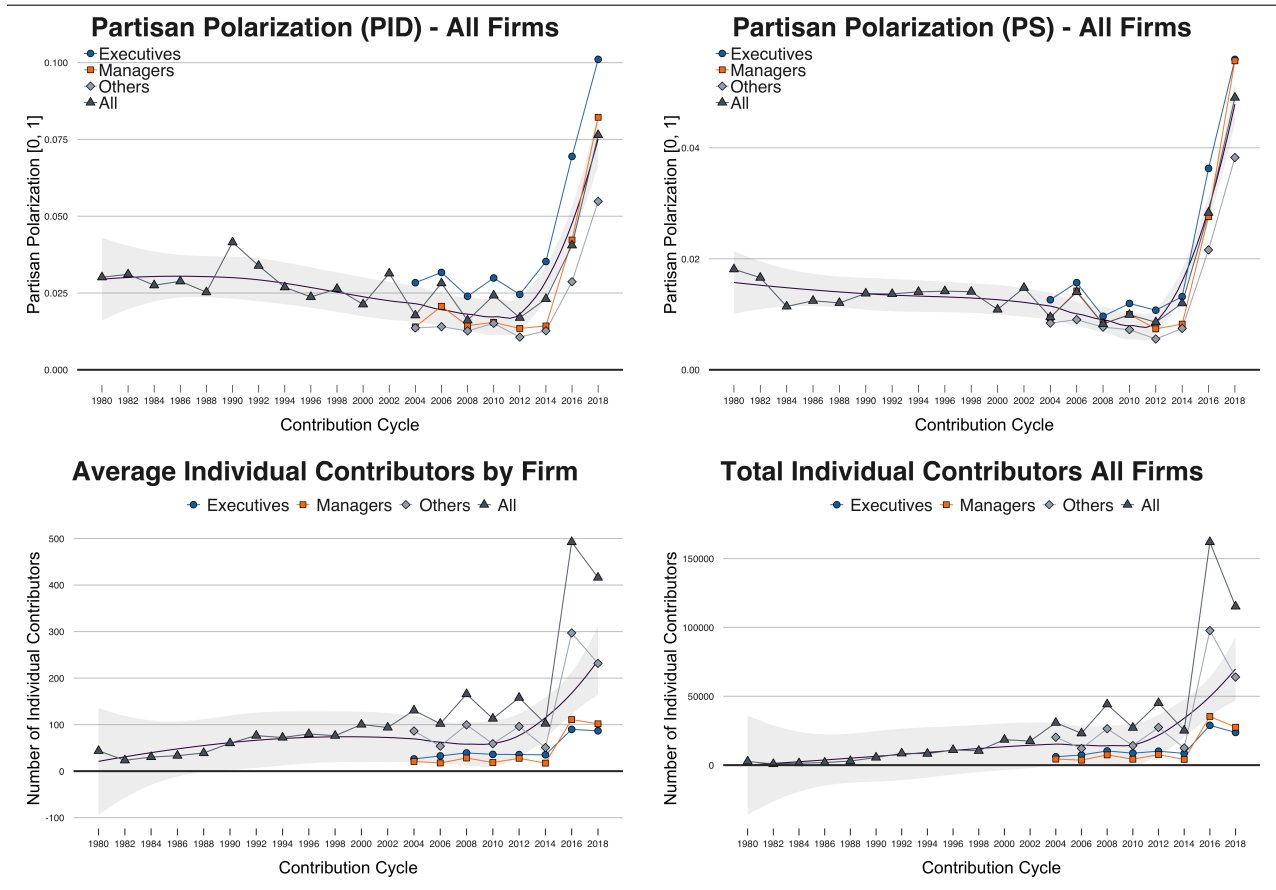


Figure 2.5: Partisan Polarization Across Fortune 400 Firms, 1980-2018

Notes: Partisan polarization calculated by election cycle and occupational hierarchy (executives, managers, others, and all employees combined) using both party identity and partisan score for all firms, 1980-2018. N=336 firms. Executives include both corporate executives (such as president, CEO, or vice president) as well as other executives and board members. Managers represents management broadly defined, including both managers and directors. The category, others, reflects firm employees not in the first two groups. All employees are the combination of these groups. Election cycles 1980-2002 did not have the occupational information needed to make this differentiation. In these figures, the raw partisan polarization scores yielded from Equation 2.1 has been rescaled to a range of [0, 1] across all years, and it should be noted that with or without the scaling, the same pattern is evident.

more diverse group of employees, not only executives, were increasingly contributing in these firms. Of course, to demonstrate this would require additional analyses beyond the current scope, which to reiterate is chiefly to document whether firms are becoming increasingly homogenous in their partisanship rather than explaining why this might occur. What is ostensible in the current data is that as the number of individual contributors continued to rise in the 2000s, the decline in partisan polarization flattened until about 2012 when, despite a continued increase in individual contributors, the manifested partisan polarization also began to increase.

This seems to be particularly true from 2014-2018, where we witness a drastic increase in the total number of individual contributors as well as the average number of individuals contributing per firm. At the same time, the partisan polarization that began between 2012 to 2014, accelerates from 2014 to 2016, a period that bore out some of the more controversial presidential politicians in recent memory. These increases illustrate that not only are a greater number of individuals than ever before expressing their partisanship, but by way of publicly expressing this partisanship with their wallets, these individuals show a greater commitment to party than their baseline state of not contributing. If individuals were randomly allocated to firms, such an activation of partisanship would not result in a marked increase in within-firm partisan homogeneity. In fact, partisan homogeneity would decline, not increase as it did post-2012. Instead, what we see is evidence that individuals within firms are becoming increasingly similar in their partisan expression, particularly after 2012, increasing thereafter through 2018.

As previously theorized, this process likely has complex mechanisms but could include increased mobility of employees to relocate or select into firms that align with their partisan identity or their ideological beliefs as structured by their partisanship. Similarly, organizations might unconsciously create partisan cultures through the actions or memorandum of executives or by the political conversations and attitudes expressed by coworkers. In some cases, those partisan opinions or attitudes might reflect derogatory sentiment towards the opposite political party. Those at odds with the political majority might remain silent rather than face ostracism or instead elect to transition to another firm better suited to their political outlook. For example, if partisan minorities were to stifle their partisan expression, voluntarily exit, or face termination, we might also see some of these same patterns demonstrated above. Such ideas have grounding in the literature, especially those on affective polarization (Cowan and Baldassarri 2018; Iyengar and Westwood 2015; Iyengar et al. 2019). To better explore some of these possibilities in subsequent analyses, for example, we could directly assess the extent to which affective polarization and partisan homophily affect hiring or corporate leadership

appointments. Although these ideas are speculative, they present plausible explanations, given the evidence at hand, chiefly a decline followed by a sharp increase in partisan polarization; one that corresponds to shifts in the number of partisan contributors.

Collectively, these findings in Figure 2.5 are true of all employees on balance. While the trend exists for all employees, we can see that, in the years with discrete occupational hierarchies (2004-2018), the trend of increased party sorting also exists for executives, management, and other employees alike. Although the effects of party sorting are stronger among executives and weaker among other employees, all types of employees studied reflect this trend of increasing partisanship, on average. Rather than being simply a phenomenon affecting executives, the pattern affects all employees within the firm and suggests that over time, individual employees within these companies are becoming more politically homogenous within levels, and as suggested by the increase across all employees, they are also increasingly similar in their partisan attachments across levels. We should note several important caveats. First, early years in the temporal pattern exhibit greater variation than the average result across firms.²² Second, partisan polarization vacillates between election cycles, particularly presidential election cycles (in which more people vote and more individuals and individual contributions exist) compared to non-presidential election cycles. Lastly, as already noted, the general decline and subsequent increase in partisan polarization is perhaps explained by the increased number of individual contributors and total contributions during this period.²³ In particular, we can view the combination of an increased number of contributors with the increased partisan polarization in society en masse to coalesce with the likely fact that even without the rise in affective polarization in recent years, individuals were already likely sorted

²²There are several reasons for this trend. First, the Fortune 400 list, taken in 2018, necessarily shifts over time, such that only 134 of the 336 companies evaluated also had data in 1980, and of those existing in the dataset during that election cycle, only 26 had the imposed $N \geq 10$ individuals with a known major party identity and known partisan score. In part, because the graphs reflect within-firm trends averaged across multiple firms and the firms present in all years differ from firms that only have data in recent years, the increased variability in the 1980s through 2000s follows expectation.

²³Such trends are evident in Figure 2.5, however, we can also see increased numbers of contributors by period in Table 2.4.

to some degree into firms that leaned toward the Republican or Democratic direction.²⁴ If such latent partisan dispositions heighten or activate following increased party sorting in society, then the increasing political polarization of political elites and their election campaigning could, in turn, amplify subsequent party sorting as an increasing number of copartisans demonstrate mutually reinforcing expressions of partisanship.²⁵ The dramatically increasing number of individual contributors in recent years, particularly during the 2016 election cycle, suggests that increased activation may be occurring.

2.4.2 Identifying the Emergence of Partisan Firms

Although analyzing overall trends in partisan polarization answers the first element of the research question, namely whether there has been an increase in party sorting, it does not fully address whether certain types of firms emerge as especially partisan political actors and whether these are generally Democratic or Republican firms. For that, we need to turn toward hierarchical cluster analysis, which has been previously used in the assessment of emergent organizational forms (Laumann and Knoke 1987; Powell and Sandholtz 2012; Ruef 2000). As discussed, I use a dynamic time warping distance matrix in combination with the hierarchical cluster analysis to better identify alignments in temporal partisan patterns. For emphasis, although we might arrive at similar results by simply categorizing firms in terms of overall mean partisanship and how polarized they were using a measure of partisan polarization, it would be difficult to decide exactly how to make these decisions. For example, what year would we use for each measure and which level of the occupational hierarchy should be considered for each variable, and in what year? As seen in Table 2.5, even with a small number of variables, we can have 30-60 parameters varying for up to 20 years for as many

²⁴For example, see the work of increased party sorting or partisan polarization in recent years (Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; Baldassarri and Goldberg 2014), and the idea that individuals sort into firms with which they align (DiMaggio 1992; Kalleberg and Sørensen 1979; Rivera 2012b; Schneider 1987; Sørensen and Kalleberg 1981).

²⁵See Hetherington (2001), Hetherington (2009), Sood and Iyengar (2016). I elaborate on the possibility of an activation hypothesis in the dissertation introduction and conclusion chapters.

as 336 firms. Dynamic time warping cluster analysis can handle such complex variations in simultaneous multivariate time series data, for example, revealing asynchronous pattern alignment, that cannot be easily deduced with a simpler method.²⁶ As previously shown, I utilized the dynamic time warping distance on Model 1 parameters using the AGNES, Ward’s method with $K = 3$ clusters. This model provides the following cluster dendrogram.

Hierarchical Time Series Cluster Model of Partisan Polarization 1980 - 2018 (AGNES HCA Using Ward)

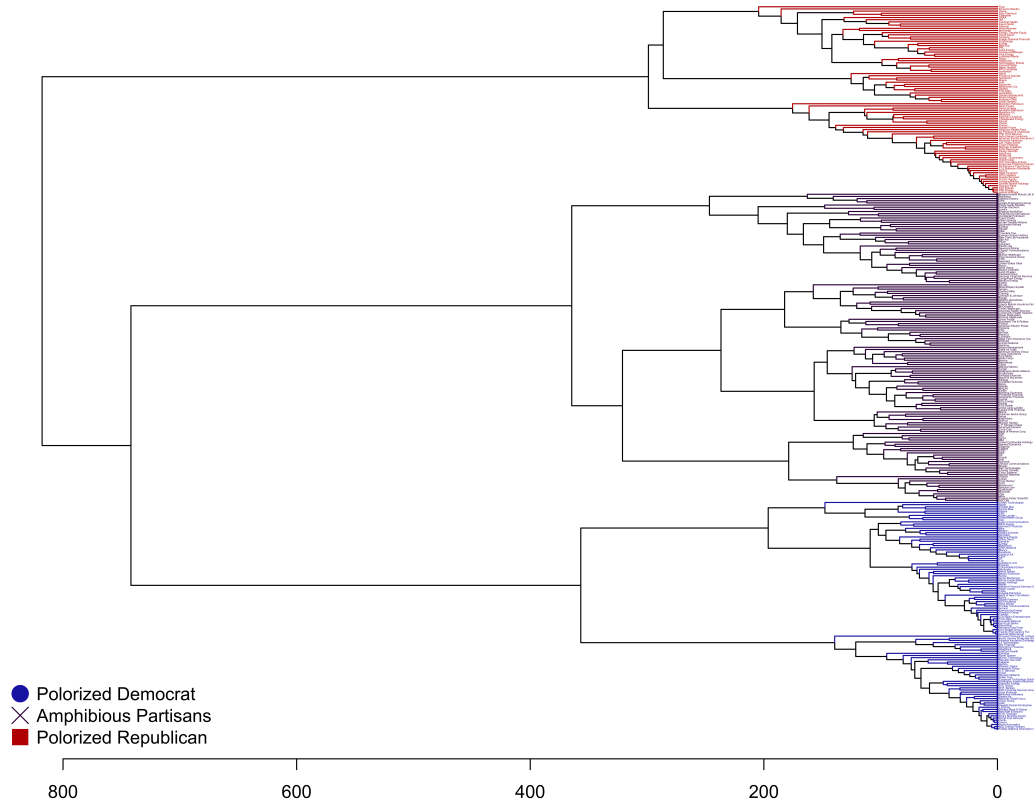


Figure 2.6: Result of Dynamic Time Warping HCA AGNES-Ward Clustering Model for Fortune 400 Companies, 1980-2018

Notes: Dynamic time warping refers to a type of time series clustering model, specifically the use of the dynamic time warping distance matrix, to which I apply the hierarchical cluster analysis (HCA) AGNES algorithm using Ward’s method for individual-level firm data, 1980-2018. $K=3$ clusters determined the following optimal cluster analysis for various time periods. AGNES Ward’s method selected, agglomerative coefficient = 0.92.

To help facilitate an understanding of the three primary clusters, I will provide a few examples to help us infer meaning from the classification. Assessing the results, I label these clusters

²⁶An admittedly interesting comparison could be drawn from comparing the dynamic time warping clustering analysis with a considerably simpler manual classification using only a few variables collapsed across years and occupational categories. Such an analysis is beyond the current scope, although it should be noted that even using a simpler non-dynamic time warping hierarchical cluster analysis yields similar results, which I include in Appendix B for completeness.

as polarized Democratic, amphibious partisan, and polarized Republican firms (Figure 2.6). From Figure 2.6 we can generalize several findings about the clusters. For example, a number of the partisan Republican firms include major oil and energy companies such as Marathon Petroleum, Marathon Oil, Anadarko Petroleum, Phillips 66, or ConocoPhillips; agricultural and food companies such as Monsanto, Dean Foods, and Hormel; and major home improvement retailers or construction equipment manufacturers such as Home Depot and Caterpillar. Conversely, many of the polarized Democratic companies identified include large technology companies such as Apple, Alphabet (Google), and Amazon, as well as entertainment groups such as Disney, Netflix, or CBS, and consumer product firms like Nike or Starbucks. Meanwhile, amphibious firms represent some of the largest corporations including banks such as Goldman Sachs and J.P. Morgan Chase, automobile manufacturers such as General Motors or Ford, military providers such as Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and Northrop Grumman, and major retailers like Walmart and Walgreens. Although the exact degree of partisan polarization and the average partisanship of each company varies, as we will see, when taken on balance, the time series hierarchical clustering method appears to have identified three types of emergent firms with distinct qualities.

2.4.3 Evaluating Partisan Polarization in Democratic, Republican, and Amphibious Firms

Let us first consider changes in partisan polarization over time for the three types of organizations (Figure 2.7). Examining Figure 2.7, which illustrates changes in partisan polarization using both the party identity and partisan score measures, we can see that, similar to the overall trends across all firms, party sorting (within-firm partisan homogeneity) began to substantially increase after 2010 and 2012, particularly for polarized Republican firms. When examining the degree of partisan polarization in the identified organization types, note some general patterns that exist. First, regardless of firm type, all firms showed increases in partisan polarization from 2012 to 2018, mirroring the overarching pattern established

previously. Yet, whereas the increase in party sorting does not truly crystalize in amphibious firms until after 2010-2012, polarized Democratic and Republican firms evidence a slightly higher level of partisan polarization between 2004 and 2010 compared to amphibious firms. Although a higher degree of party sorting emerges from the plots calculating polarization from the binary two-party measure versus the partisan score, both measures increase post-2012.

Focusing on Democratic firms specifically,²⁷ one trend that stands out in either graph is that the levels of partisan polarization, while admittedly lower on average, exemplify a higher degree of similarity across occupational levels than other types of firms. Whereas there is typically less partisan homogeneity (and a higher measure of polarization) among executives compared to other employees in Republican and amphibious firms, this is not the case in Democratic firms. In other words, the level of partisan polarization by executives in these companies is quite similar to the degree of party sorting among the average employee. By contrast, a large magnitude of difference separates the polarization of executives and other employees in amphibious firms.

This latter point deserves highlighting. Although some amphibious firms have higher levels of partisan homogeneity among executives and managers, these same firms have considerable political diversity among common employees. Consider, for example, the average employee outside firm leadership in Democratic firms who experiences less political diversity than analogous employees in amphibious firms. So while the executives in amphibious firms might have higher partisan polarization compared to executives in Democratic firms, the typical employee in a Democratic firm is more likely to work with others who hold the same partisan identity than the typical employee in an amphibious firm. In other words, in a polarized Democratic firm, an entry-level employee is more likely to share the same partisanship as firm executives. The same cannot be said for amphibious firms.

²⁷Echoing a prior point, election cycles between 1980 and 1990 exhibit substantial variation, particularly for Democratic firms, many of which are technology-based and did not exist or were not in the Fortune 400 during that period.

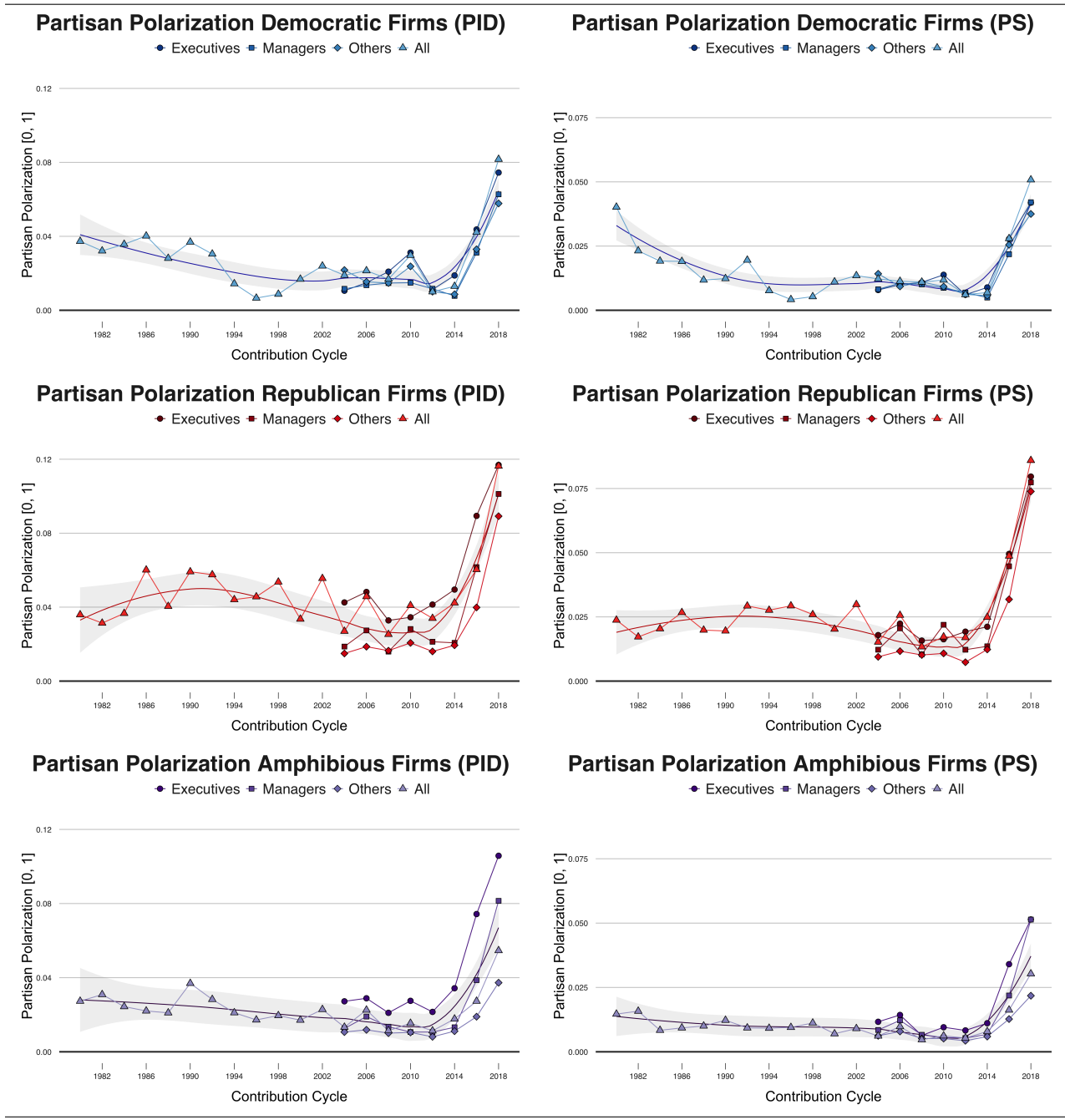


Figure 2.7: Partisan Polarization Levels (by Partisan Metric) in Identified Democratic, Amphibious, and Republican Firms

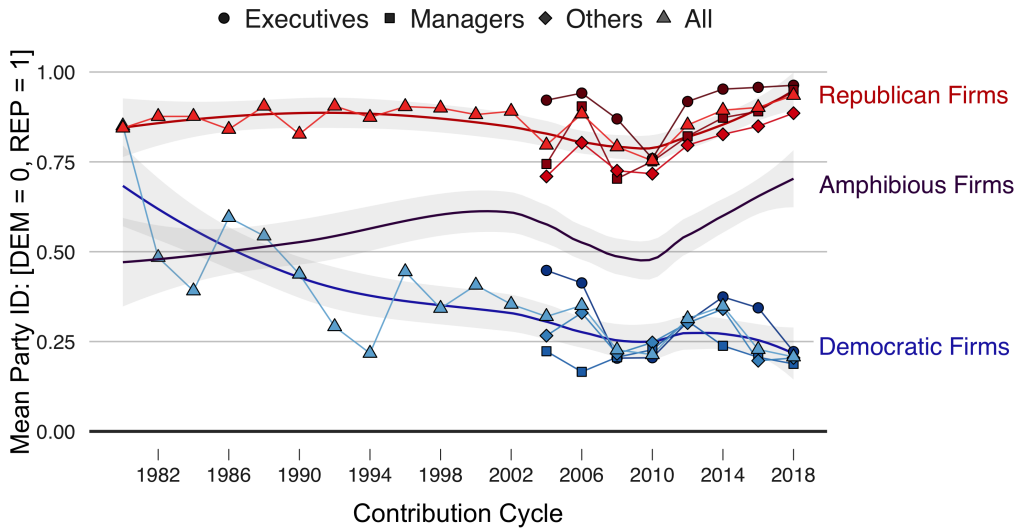
Notes: Partisan polarization calculated using *party identity* or *partisan score* for Democratic, amphibious, and Republican firms. Partisan profile classified using dynamic time warping hierarchical cluster analysis, AGNES algorithm, using Ward's method for individual-level firm data, 1980-2018. Each subplot represents one of those three identified clusters.

2.4.4 Intensifying Partisanship in Democratic, Republican, and Amphibious Firms

Yet, measures of partisan polarization in isolation do not tell the full story. We must also consider the average partisanship of these Democratic, Republican, and amphibious firms to better understand how they change over time (Figure 2.8). In particular, both polarized Democratic and Republican firms illustrate an intensification of average political partisanship across occupational hierarchies with successive election cycles. In other words, individuals within these firms are becoming stronger partisans. Employees in Democratic firms are becoming stronger Democrats while those working in polarized Republican firms are becoming stronger Republicans. These trends of intensification remain particularly acute in polarized Democratic as well as Republican firms, which demonstrate intensification of partisanship, both by mean party affiliation and mean partisan score. We can see, for example, that from 1980 to 2018, the classified Democratic firms fundamentally transform, shifting from primarily Republicans to primarily Democrats.

Whereas over 75% of individuals in these firms could be characterized as Republicans in the early 1980s, from 2016 and onward, over 60% were Democrats. Moreover, the average partisan score of individuals in these firms transformed from weak Republican to strong Democrat. To repeat a prior point, part of this phenomenon is driven by the limited number of included firms in 1980, combined with the fact that of these, an even smaller number are Democratic. Apple stands out as a preeminent example. Although Apple is presently an example of a polarized Democratic firm, in the early 1980s, we see evidence that employees contributing therein were more likely to be Republican. Combining the party transition of a small number of firms combined with the influx of many new distinctly Democratic firms, such as Tesla, Netflix, or Alphabet (Google), among others, gives the impression that this is primarily a Democratic phenomenon. Yet, considering the mean party identification in Democratic firms from 2010 to 2018, these firms showed some movement toward the Republican direction before becoming increasingly Democratic and returning to 2010 levels.

Rep, Dem, and Amphibious Firms - Mean Partisanship (PID)



Rep, Dem, and Amphibious Firms - Mean Partisanship (PS)

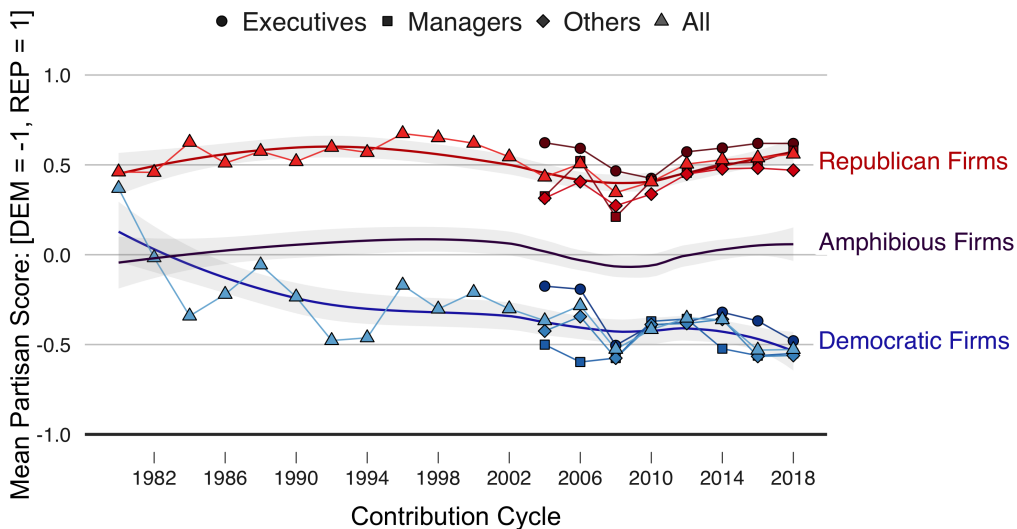


Figure 2.8: Mean Partisanship in Dynamic Time Warping AGNES-Ward (1980-2018)
Democratic, Amphibious, and Republican Firms

Notes: Mean partisanship calculated using either *party identity* [$DEM = 0, REP = 1$] or *partisan score* [$DEM = -1, REP = 1$] for Democratic, amphibious, and Republican firms. Firms classified using (HCA) AGNES, Ward's method, 2004-2018, $N = 336$ Firms.

Echoing an earlier point, employees at all levels in these Democratic firms grew increasingly homogeneous in their partisanship. Consider in 2004 and 2006 the partisan gap between executives versus managers and other employees. By 2008, these gaps had narrowed and

remained tightly correlated, particularly from 2008 to 2014, but also through the most recent presidential and midterm elections.

Offering a foil to polarized Democratic firms, polarized Republican firms also became increasingly partisan during this period. On average, these firms went from having over 50% Republicans to about 75% Republicans from 1980 to 2018. That was in contrast to the period of 2010 to 2018 in Democratic firms, wherein Democratic firms become slightly more Republican before returning to 2010 levels in 2018. In Republican firms, we see a consistent increase in Republican Party expression during this same period. A smaller subset of these firms experience even higher levels of partisan alignment. In the extreme, consider Marathon Petroleum, which in 2018 had 99.8% Republican Party identification among all measured employees. Throughout this period, the average partisan score of individuals went from primarily weak to moderate Republican and then crossed firmly into strong Republican territory in recent years. Whereas employees across levels in Democratic firms became more homogenous, a slight divide between executives and all other employees (management and others) exists in Republican firms, where executives are consistently among the strongest Republicans within those companies.

Finally, the partisanship of amphibious firms provides some important insights. Representing a large subset of firms, amphibious organizations generally leaned Republican through most years, hovering primarily around an even split between Democrats and Republicans on average. There is some evidence that this behavior is perhaps strategic and varies with presidential party leadership, particularly from 2004 and onwards. For example, in 2008 and 2010 during President Obama's first term, the majority in amphibious firms leaned towards the Democratic direction, a trend that did not fully recover in the Republican direction until the 2014-2018 election cycles. Reiterating the general partisan moderation of amphibious firms, the mean partisan score for these companies hovers around 0, which represents independents or a politically neutral position. Collectively, these findings

help to validate the results of the dynamic time warping, hierarchical clustering analysis in identifying discrete types of partisan firms.

2.4.5 Linking Partisan Firms and Organizational Behavior

Although the aforementioned analyses work to establish the emergence of partisan polarization across firms—or increasing partisan homogeneity within in firms—for such analyses to reflect the idea that firms are emergent in their partisanship, at least in the collective sense that extends beyond considering firms as simply a reflection of their individual actor members, we should expect, in some sense, that these firms would also differ at the firm level in a way associated with the identified partisanship of the individual partisans therein. To help assess this possibility, I lastly consider an additional external dataset by a third party purveyor, MSCI, which documents both problematic and beneficial environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors at the firm level for institutional investors. This dataset, known as the *MSCI ESG KLD STATS*, is a longitudinal dataset (1991-2016), which documents thoroughly researched annual scores (1 or 0) in a number of specific topic areas including positive indicators which reflect best practices for corporations as well as negative factors that firms should avoid. Of particular note, the MSCI documents diversity and labor rights factors, among other measures of corporate social responsibility.

To assess how the classified Democratic, amphibious, and Republican firms vary in their firm-level behavior, I joined the MSCI data to the clustering results by firm, summarizing the MSCI firm rankings across years. In this way, both positive and negative ranked factors accumulate over time. So how are firm behaviors associated with the dynamic time warping HCA classified clusters? Examining the correlation heatmap of significant correlations ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), we see results that mirror the expected partisan affiliations of these firms. For example, partisan polarized Democratic firms were significantly more likely to have fewer union relation concerns, and were significantly more likely to be positively ranked on their

and positive correlations to having boards of directors which both did not have any minorities and also had no women.

So how do amphibious firms fare? Although there are some issues needing attention, such as being positively associated with increased union relation concerns or a slightly higher number of diversity concerns, in most respects, amphibious firms do well on a number of the diversity metrics. For example, amphibious firms are more likely to have a higher number of diversity strengths as well as progressive gay and lesbian policies, employment for the disabled, strong work-life benefits, and strong gender diversity on their board of directors. Similarly, amphibious firms are less likely to have boards without minorities or women.

How might we adjudicate the findings for amphibious versus Democratic firms? First, there are more amphibious firms than Democratic firms, and these firms are among the oldest and most established firms in the dataset. Indeed, many of the technology firms found in the Democratic polarized firms, such as Netflix or Tesla did not exist in the 1990s, or even if they did, were not publicly traded and therefore not in the MSCI data. In combination, because the data is aggregated across years, firms that appear in more years have higher totals in both positive and negative factors, and thus have a greater potential of a significant correlation with firm classifications. In either case, the firm-level diversity, governance, and labor factors align with expectations we might have for Democratic, Republican, and amphibious firms. These results suggest that the classifications yielded using individual-level partisan data do, in fact, translate to firm-level partisan associations and organizational behavior.

2.5 Discussion

Throughout this analysis, I have sought to examine a fundamental research question: Have we seen an increase in partisan sorting within firms, such that the employees therein have become increasingly homogenous in their partisan identity? If so, do these patterns of increased party

sorting uniformly exist across multiple occupational hierarchies, and have certain types of organizational forms emerged? We might also ask whether corporate politics are shifting such that the firm is emerging as a political actor as reflected by the increased partisan homogeneity and consolidated political attachments of its employees, and do such notions of firm-actorhood correlate with firm-level behavior? As I have demonstrated in the analysis, we have seen that partisan polarization has undoubtedly increased across firms in the past several decades, such that individuals within firms are increasingly alike in their partisanship and increasingly dissimilar between firms of opposing parties. Rather than a phenomenon simply affecting executives or corporate elites, party sorting has increasingly manifested across occupational hierarchies to include managers and all other types of employees. Some types of firms, however, are more affected than others.

Using dynamic time warping in combination with hierarchical cluster analysis, my study reveals three types of emergent organizational forms, namely polarized Democratic firms, polarized Republican firms, and amphibious firms that are more generally moderate and which have more partisan diversity between executives and other employees. Of these firm types, Democratic and Republican firms exemplify the strongest cases for emergence, particularly given both the homogeneity of partisan attachment across occupational levels and the transformation of these firms as increasingly strong partisan entities. As seen in the analysis, the phenomenon of increasing partisan polarization is not simply an individual-level manifestation of increasing partisanship occurring within society, but rather a condition that is systematically increasing and gravitating toward opposite partisan poles in Democratic and Republican firms, respectively. In other words, although individuals might increasingly identify with one party or another, such results would not inherently cause *firms* to appear increasingly homogenous in their partisan expression without some combination of individual sorting into firms matching their partisan disposition, and perhaps some combination of voluntary or involuntary departure or suppression of partisan minorities in firms. Rather than simply affect individuals, the partisanship that emerges among individuals in these firms

translates to firm-level behavior, for example, differential institutional investor rankings on firm diversity and workforce climate.

These findings have a number of implications to the existing research. The emergence of several types of partisan polarized firms, particularly polarized Democratic firms, underscores my argument of *organizational partisanship*, or the idea that firms can emerge as political actors not only through the partisan identities and the partisan strength of its employees, but institutionally as a phenomenon associated with differential firm-level behaviors. While the mechanisms of such a phenomenon certainly deserve further attention, these results, nonetheless, have implications for the firm-actorhood literature (Bromley and Sharkey 2017; King et al. 2010; Meyer and Bromley 2013). For example, instead of harnessing the power of firm-actorhood from the perspective of position-taking in official corporate records or strategic documents (Bromley and Sharkey 2017; Meyer and Bromley 2013), which we might consider formal organizational structure, I have shown that firm-actorhood can emerge through the informal partisan representation of its employees. Recall that firm-actorhood must embody sovereignty, purposive action, and identity (King et al. 2010), where identity is the cornerstone (Bromley and Sharkey 2017; King et al. 2010) guiding purposive action, and this action is enabled by organizational sovereignty. Therefore, the actions of firms to curate and regulate the suitability, culture, and socialization of its members (Chandler 1962; Hannan and Freeman 1977; King et al. 2010; Stinchcombe 1965), whether through formal structures or informal organizational repertoires (Clemens 1993), not only exemplifies firm actorhood but also works to characterize its partisan identity and the partisan climate evident within the firm. Since these identifying qualities are partisan, and thus political, such firms may be considered political actors and evidence organizational partisanship. Methodologically, this analysis also proves fruitful in demonstrating that emergent firm classification can be identified through an analysis of firm employees, and such classifications have verifiable association with differential organizational behavior.

Building on the literature on emergent organizational forms (Padgett and McLean 2006; Powell and Sandholtz 2012; Powell et al. 2005; Ruef 2000), this work also illustrates that beyond mechanisms of reconfiguration or transposition to create new organizational forms, especially innovative and newly founded firms (Powell and Sandholtz 2012), extant firm political climates might also shift. For example, while firms might maintain existing formal structure and strategy, the transposition of external partisan attitudes or repertoires characterized by affective polarization occurring in society, could permeate the firm to activate the partisanship of those therein (Clemens 1993; Iyengar and Westwood 2015; Powell et al. 2005; Sood and Iyengar 2016). As a result, the partisanship of the labor force within firms can coalesce and strengthen. Although the current research cannot definitively uphold particular mechanisms for the emergence of organizational partisanship, for example selection hypotheses versus routinized labor market biases based in affective polarization, such studies would have presupposed the existence of a phenomenon which I have documented. Future research should attune to potential mechanisms explaining the emergence of organizational partisanship, especially affective polarization and partisan homophily.

To this end, this paper lastly builds upon a plethora of research in partisan and political polarization research. On the front of firm partisanship and polarization, my work augments scholars focused on ideological distribution of citizens and board members (Bonica 2013, 2014, 2016), taking a similar approach but examining changes specific to individual partisanship instead of ideology. My work also differs from Bonica (2016), in that I examine individual partisanship not only for executives, but also other levels of employees within firms. My work here also builds from other scholars who examine partisan polarization or party sorting (Baldassarri and Bearman 2007; Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; Baldassarri and Goldberg 2014). If we adopt the perspective of polarization as a process not a state (DiMaggio et al. 1996), then the results of increasing public expression of partisanship within firms can easily be seen in this analysis, particularly in recent years. Given the rising phenomenon of affective polarization in society (Iyengar and Westwood 2015; Iyengar et al. 2019, 2012), the

increasing within-firm partisan homogeneity evidenced in this study suggests that certain firms may prove increasingly hostile toward opposing partisans. Lastly, identification of particular partisan Democratic, Republican, and amphibious firms provides further context and guidance to those evaluating differential effects of politics and partisanship for a number of organizational behaviors, such as executive pay (Gupta and Wowak 2017), corporate social responsibility (Chin et al. 2013), and business exchange (Stark and Vedres 2012). For example, I show that some of the measures of corporate social responsibility correspond to firm partisanship, an idea previously shown to associate with firm ideology (Chin et al. 2013; Gupta et al. 2017). As argued elsewhere, ideology in some of these studies, such as Gupta et al. (2017), uses the same measure of individual contributor partisanship as I did in this analysis, and in this way, my results substantiate those works, with the caveat that such scholars should advisably frame their work in terms of partisanship, not ideology. In either case, I show that partisanship throughout the firm, not just of the executives, can be associated with corporate social responsibility. Although substantial research is necessary to evaluate the complex mechanisms at play—and importantly—to document how consolidation of partisanship operates within and across firms, this paper, in helping to establish the existence and escalation of partisan polarization in Fortune 400 firms, makes a necessary first step in that direction.

APPENDIX B

Appendix Chapter 2: Methods Supplement

B.1 Alternative Approaches: Hierarchical Cluster Analysis (HCA)

An alternative approach to this analysis would be to conduct a traditional hierarchical clustering analysis utilizing data for different election cycles in a matrix, rather than using a time series algorithm such as dynamic time warping (DTW) to compute the distance matrix. For example, we might perform HCA clustering using discrete temporal periods. As seen previously, AGNES, Ward’s method models performed the best: (Table B.1).

Table B.1: HCA Model Evaluation for Three Time Periods

Model, Method	<u>Model Coefficient</u>		
	1980-2002	2004-2018	2010-2018
AGNES, UPGMA	0.659	0.513	0.563
AGNES, WPGMA	0.732	0.617	0.611
AGNES, Single Linkage	0.590	0.436	0.475
AGNES, Complete Linkage	0.831	0.756	0.791
AGNES, Ward’s Method	0.916	0.927	0.940
Diana	0.812	0.738	0.773

Source: FEC 2018a, 2018b.

Notes: N = 211, 335, 334 Firms. Based on data from 89,633; 472,840; 374,717 (Individuals X Firm X Election Cycle) for 1980-2002, 2004-2018, and 2010-2018 respectively. This data represents individual-level data aggregated from individual contributions (contribution-level data). Companies had an inclusion threshold of $n = 10$, such that each Firm X Election Cycle must have ≥ 10 individuals with a known major party ID and known partisan score.

I ran the (AGNES, Ward’s method, $K = 3$) model on a subset of the data, using a variety of partisan score and party identity aggregate measures for each firm by occupational hierarchy and election cycle. This results in an N X 192 matrix (data frame) such that each company is a single observation with 192 columns reflecting discrete variables for each partisan metric, occupational hierarchy, and cycle combination. Here N reflects the number of firms, which for

HCA (2004-2018), is $N = 335$. In these analyses, rather than use the full partisan polarization measure, I simply used the variance of the partisan identity and partisan score.

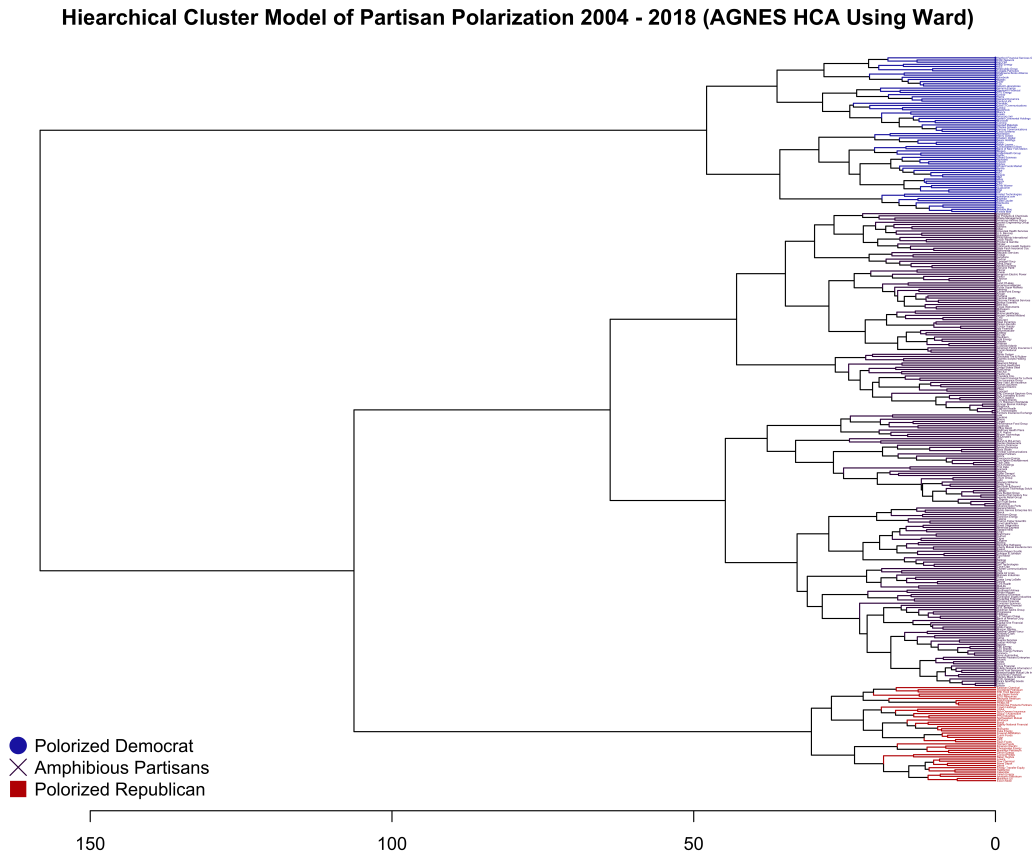


Figure B.1: Result of HCA AGNES-Ward Clustering Model for Fortune 400 Companies, 2004-2018

Notes: Hierarchical cluster analysis (HCA), AGNES algorithm, using Ward's method for individual-level firm data, 2004-2018. K=3 clusters requested following optimal cluster analysis for different time periods. AGNES Ward's method selected, agglomerative coefficient = 0.88.

From Figure B.1, we see similar firms such as Marathon Oil, Dean Foods among partisan Republican firms. Similarly, polarized Democratic companies include large technology and advertising companies such as Apple and Alphabet (Google). Below are the partisan polarization and partisanship plots for these HCA Clustered Firms.

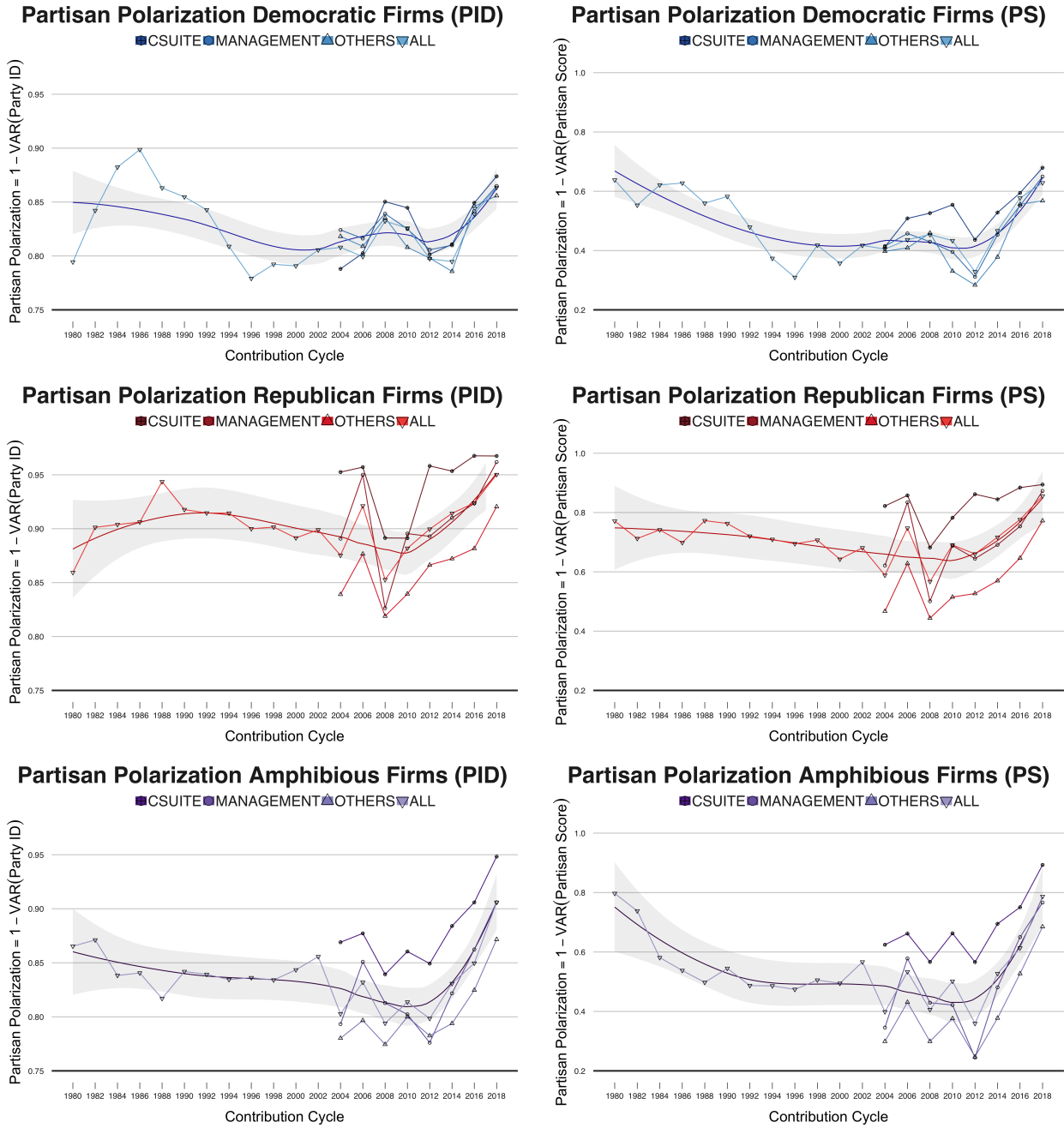


Figure B.2: Partisan Polarization Levels (by Partisan Metric) in Identified Democratic, Amphibious, and Republican Firms

Notes: Partisan polarization calculated using *party id* or *partisan score* for Democratic, Amphibious, and Republican firms. Partisan profile classified using hierarchical cluster analysis (HCA), AGNES algorithm, using Ward's method for individual-level firm data, 2004-2018. Each subplot represents one of those three identified clusters or the data for all firms (no clustering).

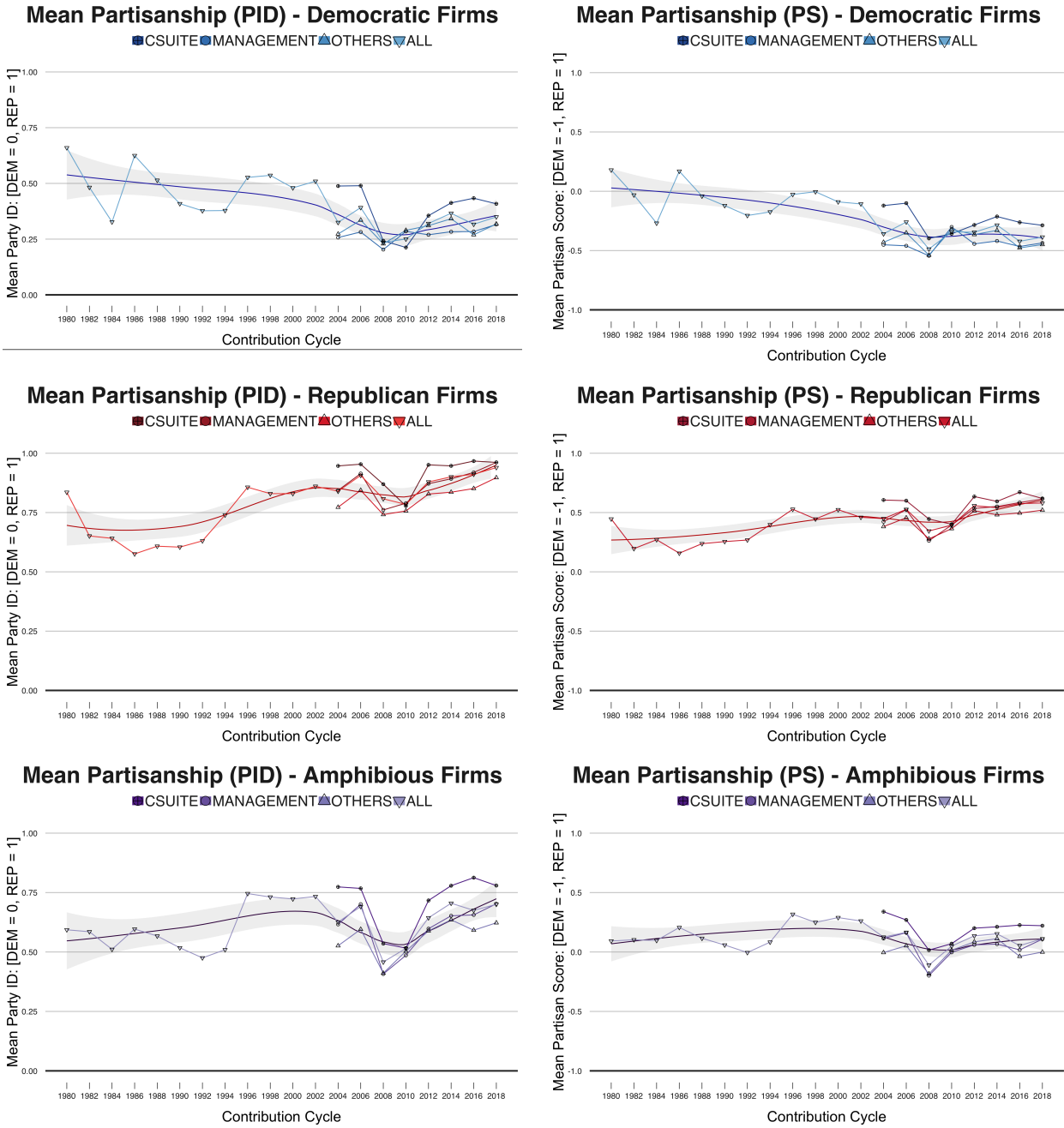


Figure B.3: Mean Partisanship in AGNES (2004-2018) Democratic, Amphibious, and Republican Firms

Notes: Mean partisanship calculated using either *party identity* [$DEM = 0, REP = 1$] or *partisan score* [$DEM = -1, REP = 1$] for Democratic, Amphibious, and Republican firms. Firms classified using (HCA) AGNES, Ward's method, 2004-2018, N = 335 Firms.

Hierarchical Cluster Model of Partisan Polarization 2010 - 2018 (AGNES HCA Using Ward)

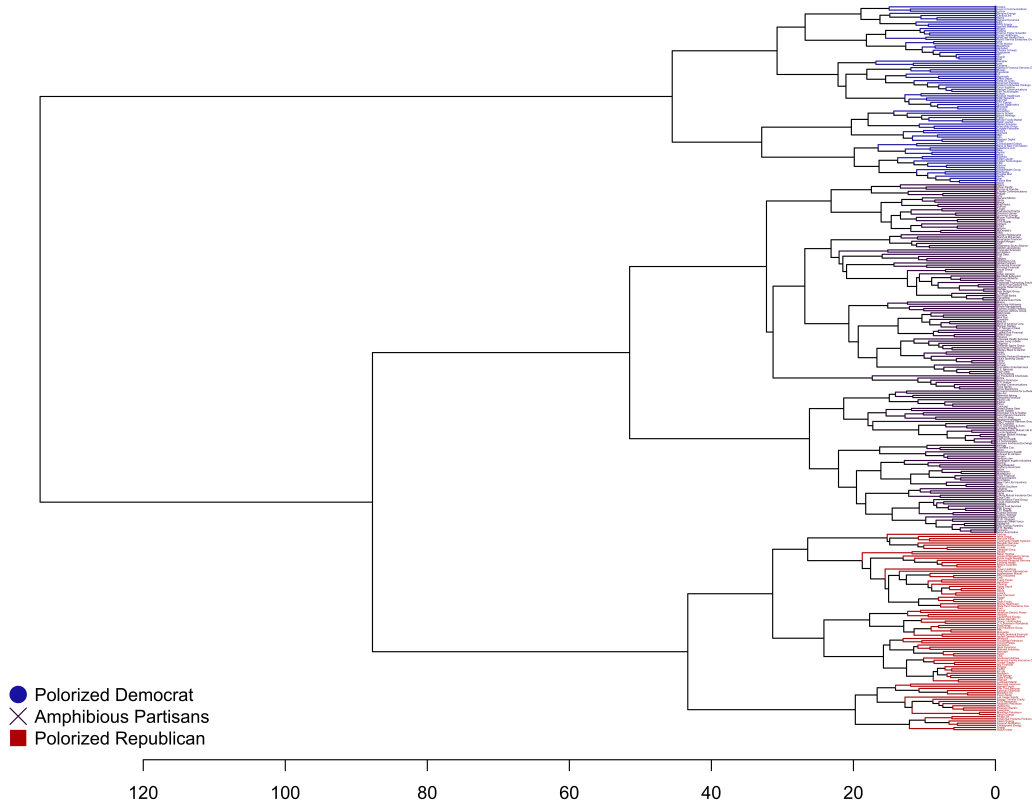


Figure B.4: Result of HCA AGNES-Ward Clustering Model for Fortune 400 Companies, 2010-2018

Notes: Hierarchical cluster analysis (HCA), AGNES algorithm, using Ward's method for individual-level firm data, 2010-2018. K=3 clusters requested following optimal cluster analysis for different time periods. AGNES Ward's method selected, agglomerative coefficient = 0.94.

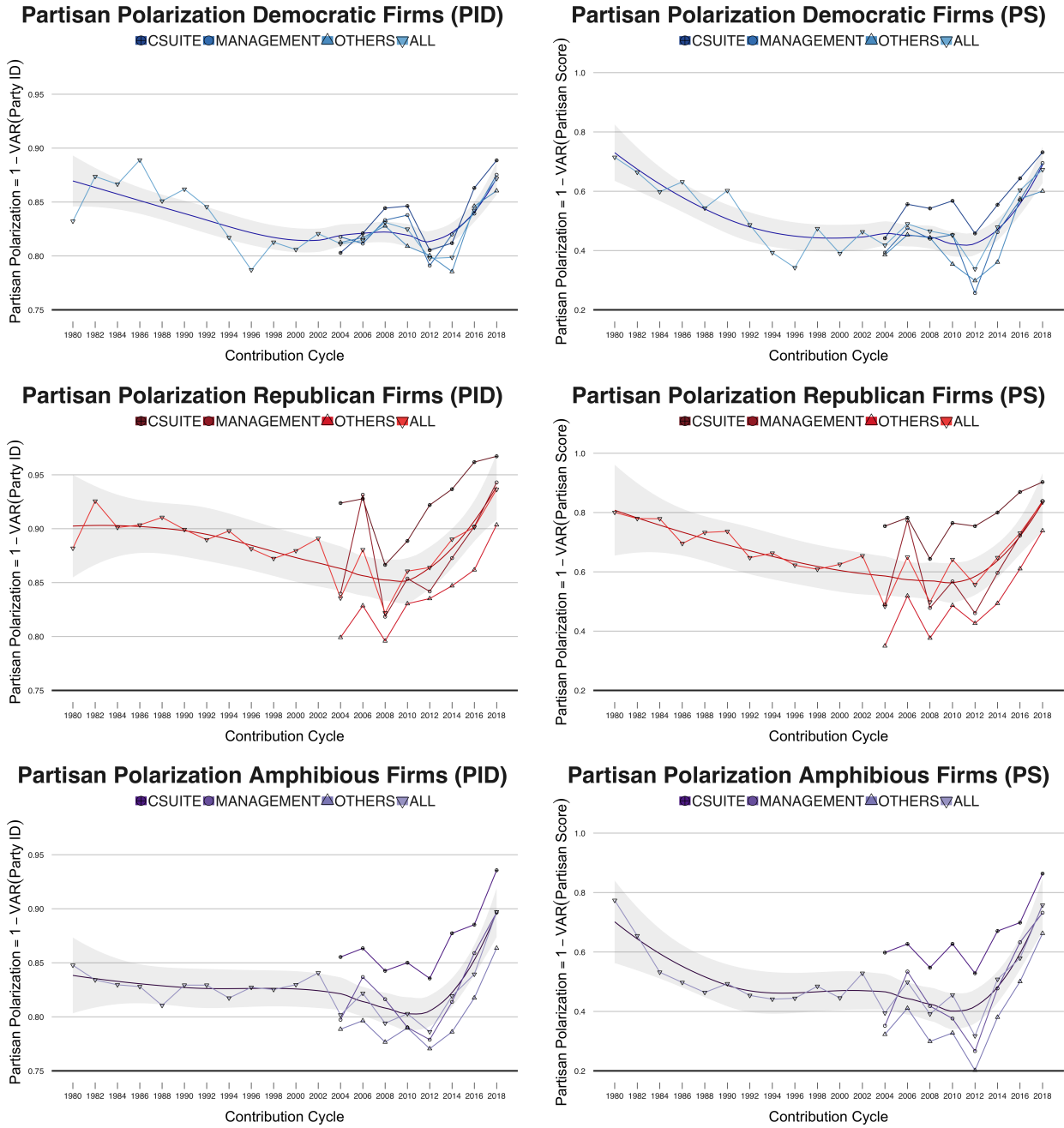
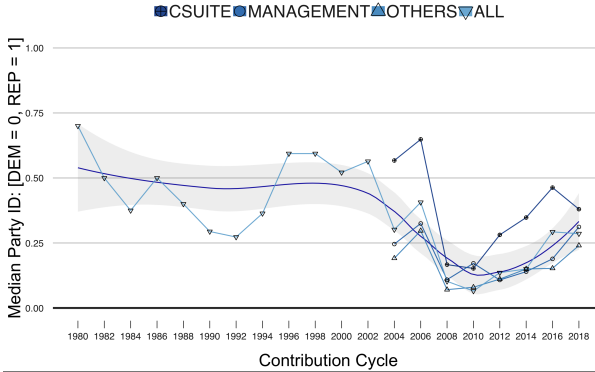


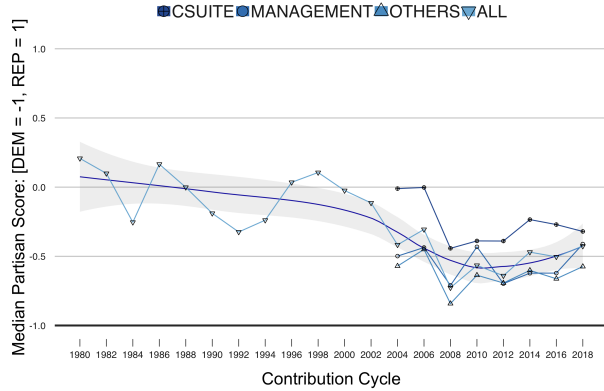
Figure B.5: Partisan Polarization in AGNES (2010-2018) Identified Democratic, Amphibious, and Republican Firms

Notes: Partisan polarization calculated using *party id* or *partisan score* for Democratic, Amphibious, and Republican firms. Partisan profile classified using hierarchical cluster analysis (HCA), AGNES algorithm, using Ward's method for individual-level firm data, 2010-2018. Each subplot represents one of those three identified clusters or the data for all firms (no clustering). $N = 334$ Firms.

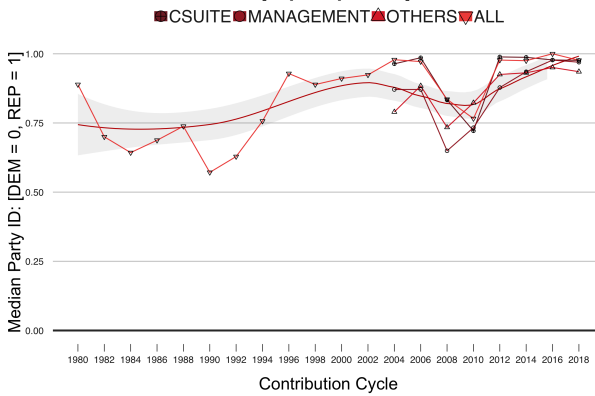
Median Partisanship (PID) - Democratic Firms



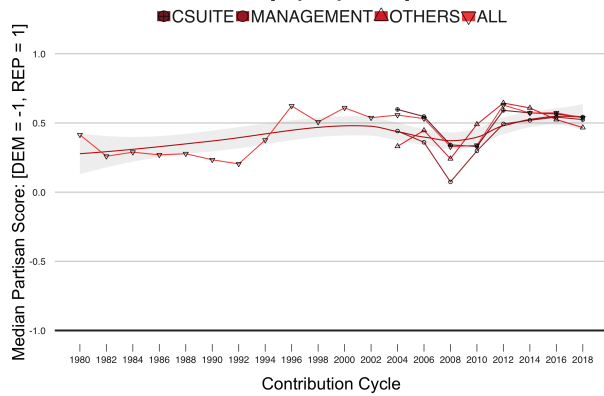
Median Partisanship (PS) - Democratic Firms



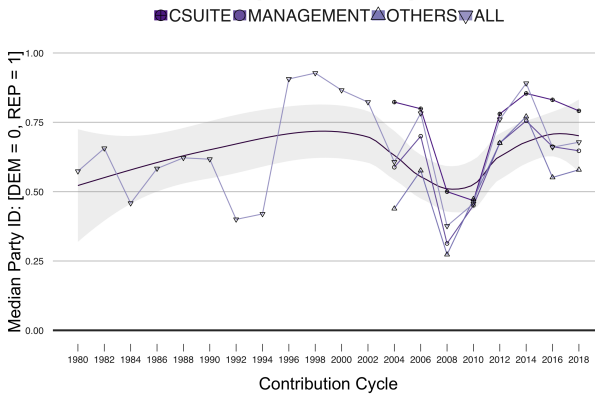
Median Partisanship (PID) - Republican Firms



Median Partisanship (PS) - Republican Firms



Median Partisanship (PID) - Amphibious Firms



Median Partisanship (PS) - Amphibious Firms

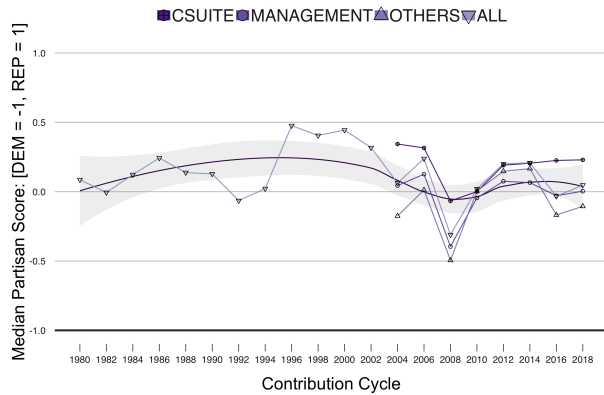


Figure B.6: Median Partisanship in AGNES (2010-2018) Democratic, Amphibious, and Republican Firms

Notes: Median partisanship calculated using either *party identity* [$DEM = 0, REP = 1$] or *partisan score* [$DEM = -1, REP = 1$] for Democratic, Amphibious, and Republican firms. Firms classified using (HCA) AGNES, Ward's method, 2010-2018, N = 334 Firms.

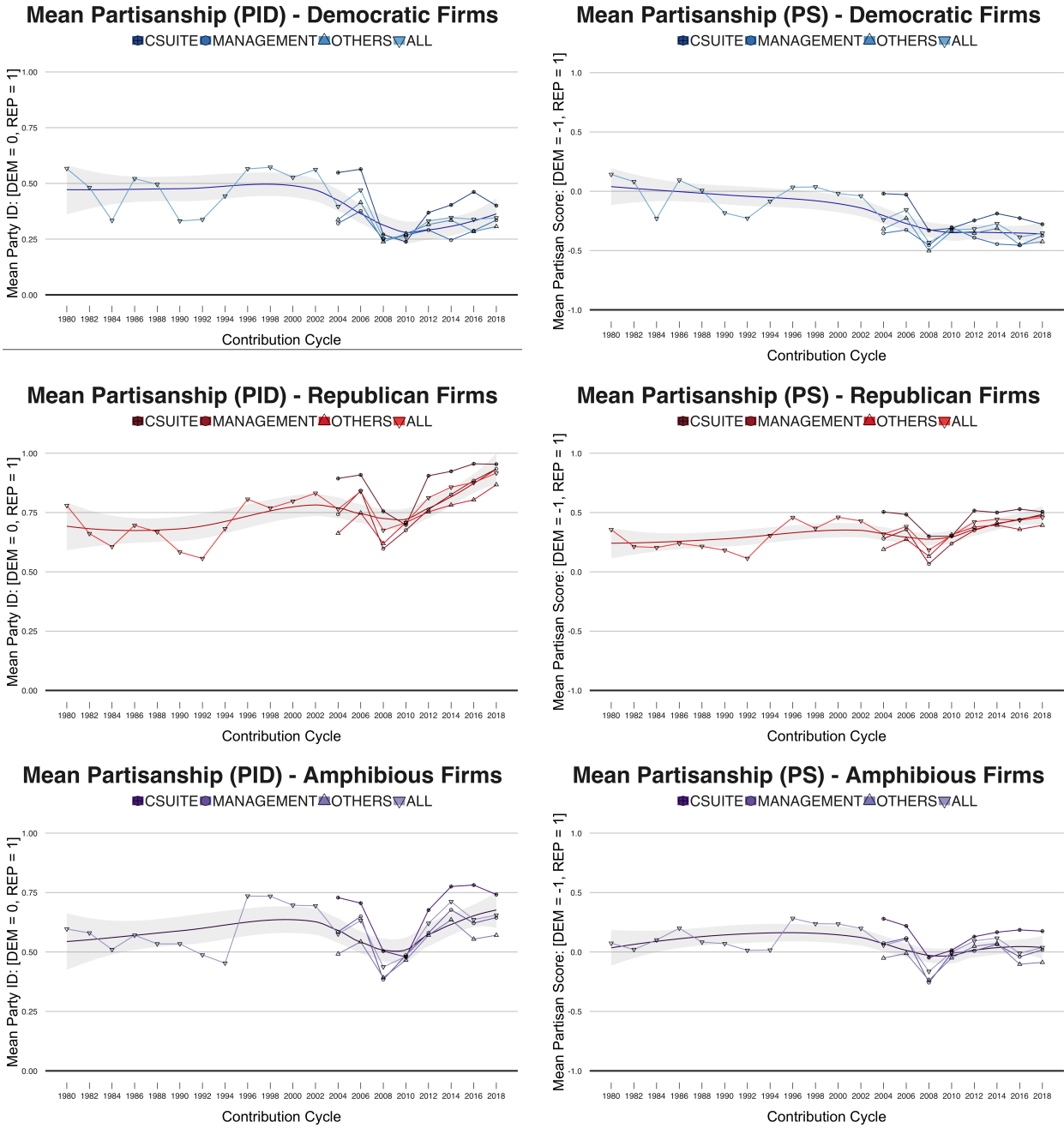
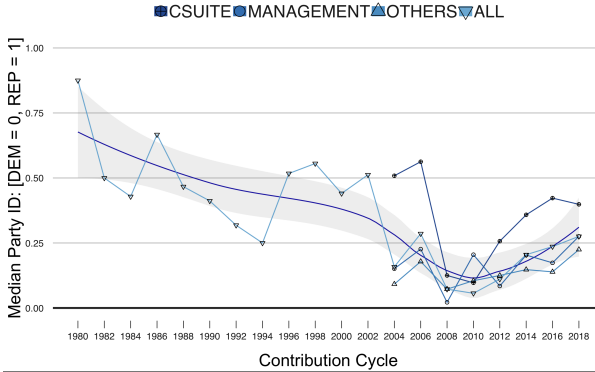


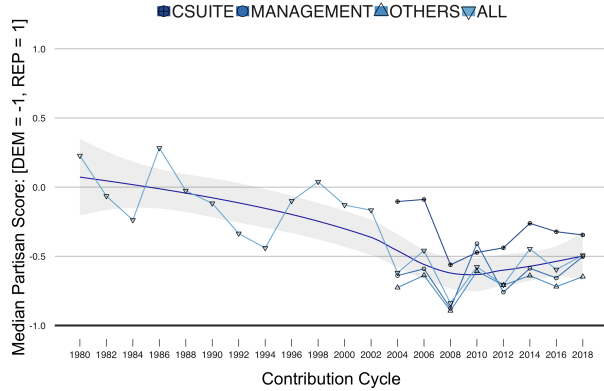
Figure B.7: Mean Partisanship in AGNES (2010-2018) Democratic, Amphibious, and Republican Firms

Notes: Mean partisanship calculated using either *party identity* [DEM = 0, REP = 1] or *partisan score* [DEM = -1, REP = 1] for Democratic, Amphibious, and Republican firms. Firms classified using (HCA) AGNES, Ward's method, 2010-2018, N = 334 Firms.

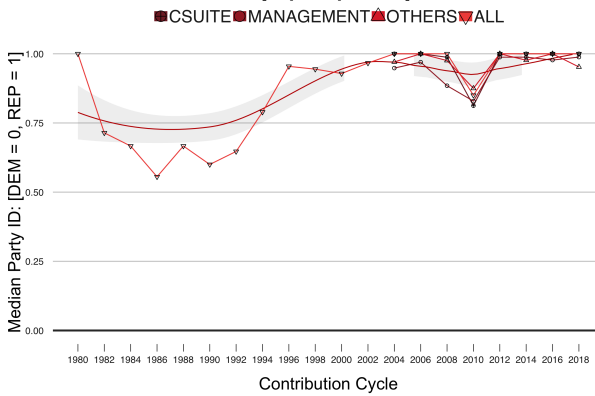
Median Partisanship (PID) - Democratic Firms



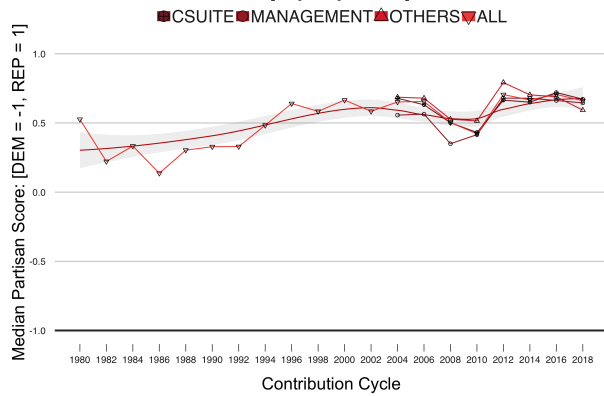
Median Partisanship (PS) - Democratic Firms



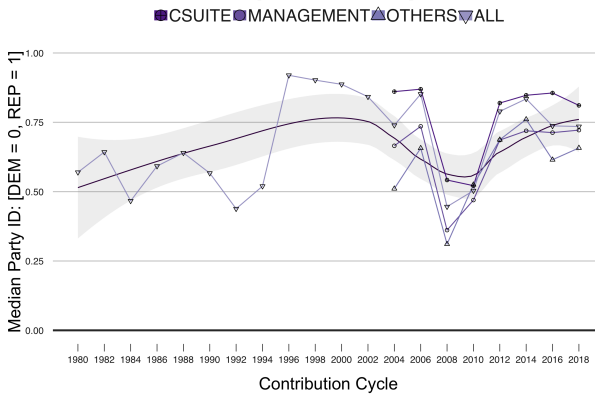
Median Partisanship (PID) - Republican Firms



Median Partisanship (PS) - Republican Firms



Median Partisanship (PID) - Amphibious Firms



Median Partisanship (PS) - Amphibious Firms

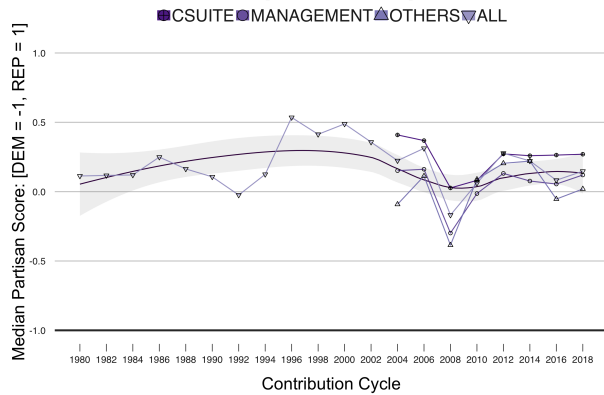


Figure B.8: Median Partisanship in AGNES (2004-2018) Democratic, Amphibious, and Republican Firms

Notes: Median partisanship calculated using either *party identity* [$DEM = 0, REP = 1$] or *partisan score* [$DEM = -1, REP = 1$] for Democratic, Amphibious, and Republican firms. Firms classified using (HCA) AGNES, Ward's method, 2004-2018, N = 335 Firms.

B.2 Data Without Minimal Thresholds

Table B.2: Individual Partisans at Fortune 400 Companies (No Threshold), 1980-2018

	1980-2018	1980-1988	1990-1998	2000-2008	2010-2018
Major Party ID					
DEM	199,790 (36)	5,073 (47)	17,883 (41)	56,226 (43)	120,608 (33)
REP	355,462 (64)	5,830 (53)	26,023 (59)	75,225 (57)	248,384 (67)
Unknown	14,731 (3)	665 (6)	1,993 (4)	4,498 (3)	7,575 (2)
Partisan Score					
minimum	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00
median (IQR)	0.17 (-0.54, 0.51)	0.04 (-0.28, 0.77)	0.18 (-0.29, 0.87)	0.12 (-1.00, 0.81)	0.17 (-0.14, 0.43)
mean (sd)	0.05 ± 0.68	0.10 ± 0.66	0.12 ± 0.70	-0.01 ± 0.79	0.06 ± 0.63
maximum	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Unknown	3,451 (1)	234 (2)	481 (1)	939 (1)	1,797 (0)
Individual Contributions					
minimum	1	1	1	1	1
median (IQR)	2.00 (1.00, 8.00)	1.00 (1.00, 2.00)	1.00 (1.00, 2.00)	1.00 (1.00, 2.00)	4.00 (1.00, 13.00)
mean (sd)	6.81 ± 14.59	1.77 ± 1.89	1.87 ± 2.48	2.40 ± 4.19	9.16 ± 17.28
maximum	3057	38	54	109	3057
Firms					
	371	202	267	337	370
N	569,983	11,568	45,899	135,949	376,567

Source: FEC 2018a, 2018b.

Notes: N = 569,983 (Individuals X Firm X Election Cycle) represents individual-level data aggregated from individual contributions (contribution-level data). Individual contributions detail each contribution sub_ID for all individuals in the requested firms, in each election cycle 1980-2018. Categorical data, such as party identity, reports the number for each cell, followed by a percentage: N (%). Companies were previously filtered for quality control. In contrast to the table in the paper, no threshold exists for companies to appear in this table. Each Firm X Election Cycle must have only one or more individuals (who may or may not have attached partisan measures).

B.3 Robustness Checks: Constant 1980 Firms

As one of several robustness checks, I wanted to evaluate the overarching patterns of increasing partisanship after 2012, as well as the apparent decline in partisanship from the 1980s through the 1990s. Was this simply a function of compositional changes in the included Fortune 400 companies? For example fewer companies appear in the 1980 data than in recent years (since the companies were determined using the most recent F1000 list).

A second possibility regards variance as the result of the number of individuals in the data. If measures of partisan polarization fluctuate due to the number of individuals contributing within a firm for an election cycle, we might also see shifts in partisan polarization. A common

issue is that fewer individuals in a firm contribute funds during non-presidential election cycles. If too few individuals exist, the measure of partisan polarization may not be robust.

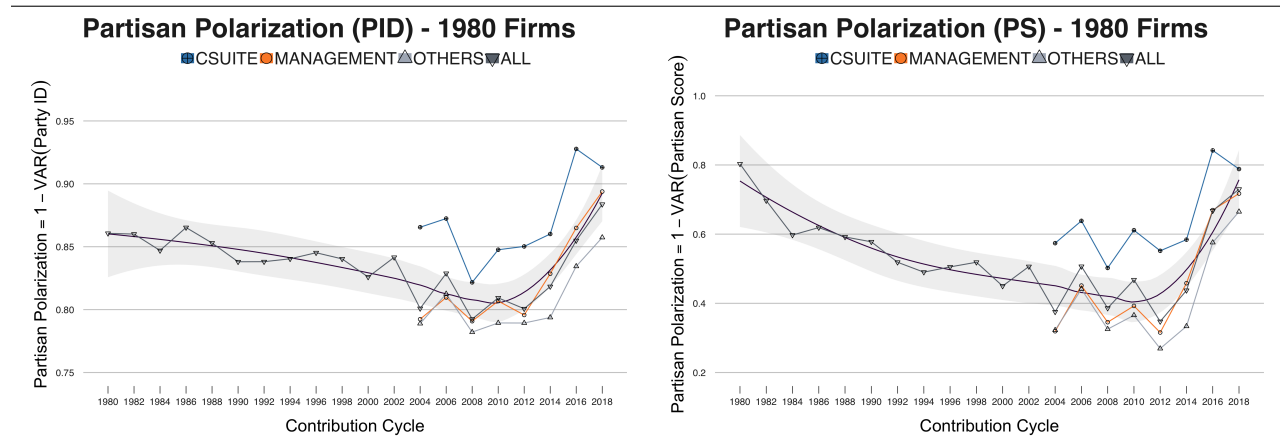



Figure B.9: Robustness Check: 1980 Constant Firms

Notes: Average partisanship calculated using either *party identity* [$DEM = 0, REP = 1$] or *partisan score* [$DEM = -1, REP = 1$] for all 1980 constant firms, $N \geq 10$ individuals. The minimum election cycle individuals was determined using the most sparse measure of individuality, having ≥ 10 individuals with a binary partisan identity (DEM or REP). The above charts reflect the 27 firms which had ≥ 10 individuals (by party id) in every election cycle 1980-2018. Thus, the changes represented are for a constant set of firms.

To help counteract both issues, I examined whether the trend in increasing partisan polarization still appeared if I kept a constant set of firms which (A) existed in 1980, with (B) at least 10 individuals with a recorded partisan identity, and (C) remain in the dataset each subsequent election cycle 1982-2018 with the condition (B). I denote these 1980 constant firms. The results are similar to those seen when all firms with at least 10 partisans are examined, as shown in the main paper.

B.4 FEC Individual Contributor Data Collection



DONATE NOW TO DEFEAT DONALD TRUMP

URGENT SUPPORT NEEDED: Our country cannot take another four years of Trump. But two of our Democratic opponents outraised us last quarter, and our campaign won't have the resources we need to win the nomination unless we raise \$1,027 by midnight tonight. Defeating Donald Trump in November comes down to getting Joe Biden on the ballot. The only way we'll make up the difference in this critical final push is with the immediate grassroots support of people like you: Will you rush a donation now to make sure Joe Biden defeats Donald Trump?

1 2) Details 3) Payment

Complete your \$5 contribution: *All fields required

Email Address

First Name Last Name

Number, Street, Apt.

ZIP City State

United States

Cell phone

Campaign finance law requires us to collect your occupation and employer.

Are you currently employed?
 Yes No

Occupation Employer


[Continue](#)

Contribution rules

- I am a U.S. citizen or lawfully admitted permanent resident (i.e., green card holder).
- This contribution is made from my own funds, and funds are not being provided to me by another person or entity for the purpose of making this contribution.
- I am making this contribution with my own personal credit card and not with a corporate or business credit card or a card issued to another person.
- I am at least eighteen years old.
- I am not a federal contractor.

Contributions to Biden For President are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal income tax purposes. The campaign does not accept contributions from corporations or their PACs, unions, federal government contractors, national banks, those registered as federal lobbyists or under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, SEC-named executives of fossil fuel companies (i.e., companies whose primary business is the extraction, processing, distribution or sale of oil, gas or coal); or foreign nationals. To comply with Federal law, we must use our best efforts to obtain, maintain, and submit the name, mailing address, occupation and name of the employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 per election. By submitting your contribution, you agree that the first \$2,800 of a contribution will be designated for the 2020 primary election, and any additional amount up to \$2,800 will be designated for the 2020 general election. By providing your mobile phone number you consent to receive recurring text messages from Biden for President. Message & Data Rates May Apply. Text HELP for Info. Text STOP to opt out. No purchase necessary. Please read our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms and Conditions](#) to understand how information about you is collected, used and disclosed by BFPCC, Inc. and any affiliates.

By proceeding with this transaction, you agree to ActBlue's [terms & conditions](#).



Donated before using a Revv account? [Login](#)

Enter your contact information:

First name* Last name*

Email*

Address* Zip*

City* State*

Phone

Campaign finance law requires us to collect your employment information.

I'm retired.

Employer* Occupation*

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Back **\$5**

Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, address, occupation, and employer of individuals whose contribution exceeds \$200 in an election cycle.

By clicking "Donate," I certify that the following statements are true and accurate:
 * I am a U.S. Citizen or lawfully admitted permanent resident
 * This contribution is made from my personal funds, not from an account maintained by a corporation, labor union, or national bank, and is not being reimbursed by another person or entity.
 * I am not a federal government contractor.

The maximum amount an individual may contribute is \$2,800 per election. Your contribution (up to \$2,800) will be designated for the primary election. The next \$2,800 will be designated for the general election.

Contributions to Donald J. Trump for President, Inc. are not tax deductible for federal income tax purposes. Contributions from corporations, labor unions, federal contractors, and foreign nationals are prohibited.

Figure B.10: Example of Data Collected in FEC Individual Contributions

Notes: As previously noted, the FEC requires that "for each contribution that exceeds \$200, either by itself or when added to the contributor's previous contributions made during the same calendar year, records must identify that contribution by: Amount; Date of receipt; and Contributor's full name and mailing address, occupation and employer" (Federal Election Commission 2018c). As we can see in these contribution forms (to be filled out by the individual contributor), such information is required even for small donations, in this example, \$5.00, regardless of prior contribution history. As described in the research methodology, both "occupation" and "employer" prove critical to identifying individuals at the firms in question. Yet, the forms have idiosyncrasies in the collection. For example, the form for Joe Biden asks "Are You Currently Employed," with options for (1) "Occupation" and (2) "Employer" only listed if you check *yes*. The form for Donald Trump lists (1) "Employer" and (2) "Occupation" along with a box to check if you are retired. For unemployed or formerly employed individuals, such differences would likely result in different data entry. In the case of Biden, we would likely see no data for occupation or employer. For Trump, we might see something along the lines of "unemployed" or "laid off" / "NA," among many possibilities. Similarly, individuals with multiple jobs have no clear way to input those options, and some individuals may incidentally put their employer in the occupation field (or vice versa).

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