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The Targeting Model of Partisanship: Explaining the Origins and Consequences of Expressive Partisanship.

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Abstract

In many democracies, politics has become more personal. Citizens have demonstrated animosity between partisan groups, distorted perceptions about reality, and loyalties that influence voting decisions while diminishing the accountability of elites. As these outcomes are evident, the nature and consequences of partisanship remain less understood. Scholarship rarely examines partisanship within the context of intense political competition. This dissertation aims to understand why partisanship becomes more personal due to changes in party strategies. Existing research distinguishes between instrumental (based on a rational approach) and expressive partisanship. While instrumental partisanship refers to support based on evaluations of policy issues and leadership, expressive partisanship reflects a personal sense of belonging and a desire for differentiation from other groups. I propose a model of partisanship that integrates these two types of attachments, theorizing the role that political parties can play in shaping a more expressive partisanship. Recently, parties have been able to collect information about voters and have developed personalized strategies using targeted appeals to social groups. Depending on prior associations between groups and parties, these appeals often match (i.e., in-targeting), mismatch (out-targeting), or fail to align prior associations with partisan predisposition (broad appeals), in turn impact partisanship. I argue that in-targeting both informs voters about group affiliations and primes partisan identity, which boosts expressive partisanship among supporters. In contrast, out-targeting distances the party from established expectations, leading to a decline in expressive partisanship. Empirically, I draw on evidence from diverse types of survey data (e.g., observational, panel data, and experimental) from Canada and the United Kingdom, where parties diversified strategies related to group-party associations. My research finds that in-targeting enhances expressive partisanship and its affective consequences, such as polarization, perceptual gaps, and voting decisions. This dissertation contributes to behaviour and comparative scholarship by highlighting how party strategies and partisan reasoning produce personal outcomes in the contemporary electorate.

Keywords

Partisanship; Parties; Targeting; Polarization; Voting Behaviour; Motivated Reasoning; Survey; Experiments; Panel Data; Canada; United Kingdom.

Summary for Lay Audience

In multiple countries, voters are deeply divided and engaged in politics than before. Many are hostile to the opposition, exhibiting distorted perceptions of political topics and naive loyalty in their voting choices. Therefore, understanding why partisan support has become so visceral is pivotal in the field of political science. Researchers either consider how partisans think or how parties compete, but how partisans consider their support under competition is rare. In this dissertation, I ask: Why has partisanship become more personal? Partisanship is the way that citizens demonstrate a connection with a particular party. This connection can occur through evaluations of party performance, known as instrumental partisanship, and through a personal sense of membership, referred to as expressive partisanship. I propose a theory that combines these two connections and examines the influence of political parties on individuals who are more personally involved in politics. Parties can collect information about voters using social media and reach out through tailored messages, known as targeted appeals. These appeals can target groups with a traditional association with the party (in-targeting), groups that support the opposition (out-targeting), and groups with no affiliation at all (broad appeals), having distinct consequences on people's partisanship. I argue that in-targeting indicates that the party is looking after its allies, which emphasizes the sense of membership and strengthens expressive partisanship. In contrast, out-targeting informs voters that the party is looking after the opposition supporters, which highlights the distance between strategy and expectations and diminishes expressive partisanship. I base my findings on diverse types of survey data, including panel data, opinion polls, and an experiment with Canadian and British voters. In these countries, parties have employed a range of strategies for targeting group support over time. My findings reveal that in-targeting increases expressive partisanship, which makes politics more emotional and personal. This dissertation contributes to the political science literature by exploring the connections between people's relationships with a party within the contemporary political landscape, considering the role that parties play in influencing politics with precision to target specific groups within the electorate.

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1. Introduction

In contemporary democracies, citizens are more divided and polarized than in the past. While maintaining favouritism toward their party, citizens have globally demonstrated increased hostility towards other groups (Samuels & Zucco, 2018; Mason, 2018; Dias & Lelkes, 2022; Huddy & Yair, 2021; Wagner, 2021; Johnston, 2023). Partisans have come to demonstrate an increasing gap in their perceptions about several political objects, from the state of the economy to climate change (Lebo & Cassino, 2007; Bisgaard & Slothuus, 2018; Matthews & Pickup, 2019; Merkley, 2021; Sorace & Hobolt, 2021; Pereira Filho & Vidigal, 2024; Chan & Stephenson, 2025). Further, the implications of partisanship for policy preferences and voting decisions appear more decisive (Bartels, 2000; Green, Palmquist, & Schickler, 2002; Achen & Bartels, 2016; Borges & Vidigal, 2018; Lachance & Beauvais, 2024). Politics, it seems, has become more personal with more intense meaning than in previous decades. Why has this happened? Why does politics seem more personal and emotional than ever before? The current state of partisanship and its consequences raise several questions about the nature of partisanship itself.

Since its development, partisanship has been conceptualized as a psychological attachment to a political party (Campbell et al., 1960). Formed early in life, partisanship shapes attitudes and opinions about multiple objects, even beyond politics (Johnston, 2006; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015). In the current literature, there are two divergent perspectives about the foundations, stability, and implications of partisanship in public opinion. On the one hand, researchers define partisanship as a ‘running tally’ of performances on critical issues and ideological positions (Downs, 1957; Fiorina, 1981; Franklin & Jackson, 1983;

Abramowitz & Saunders, 2006). Based on a rational approach, this instrumental perspective of partisanship can be stable but not fixed as a personal identity (Groenendyk, 2013). Instrumental partisanship implies a partisanship that relies on accountability and responsiveness. On the other hand, Greene (2004) demonstrates that partisanship as a social identity predicts participation and ideology. Based on social identity theory (SIT), expressive partisanship suggests that partisanship emerges from the emotional and personal sense of belonging and differentiation from other parties (Huddy, Mason, & Aarøe, 2015). Despite more participation and involvement, expressive partisanship is highly stable and implies less responsiveness (Huddy, Bankert, & Davies, 2018; Bankert, 2024). How instrumental and expressive partisanship become intensified, and the implications for behaviour, remain less understood than the distinction between the two perspectives.

This dissertation seeks to answer the following question: What role, if any, do parties play in boosting partisanship among their supporters? While instrumental partisanship stems from party performance, partisanship as a personal identity derives from early socialization (Campbell et al., 1960; Green, Palmquist, & Schickler, 2002), motivations (Groenendyk, 2013), and personality traits (Arceneaux & Vander Wielen, 2017). Beyond individual factors, partisan alignments can explain changes in the effects of partisanship on behaviour. Some studies suggest that ideology and policy agreement lead to an increase in feelings of partisanship (Levendusky, 2009; Clarke et al., 2019; Kollman & Jackson, 2021). Other studies state that partisanship is intensified with overlapping group-party associations (Mason & Wronski, 2018; Kane, Mason, & Wronski, 2021). A key point is that these studies recognize that party strategies actively contribute to perceptions of alignments, which can

prime partisan identity among supporters when addressing policy or social alignments. However, the party's role in partisanship itself remains understudied.

To fill this gap, this dissertation proposes the *Targeting Model of Partisanship* (TMP) as a way to understand the impact of a party on partisanship and the subsequent implications for behaviour. Parties can impact public opinion by informing about policy preferences and group affiliations (Kam, 2005; Goren, Federico, & Kittilson, 2009; Bullock, 2011; Slothuus & Bisgaard, 2021), as well as emphasizing identities, like racial and partisan identities (Mendelberg, 2001; Nicholson, 2012; Brader & Tucker, 2012; Klar, 2013; Tesler, 2015; Bakker, Lelkes, & Malka, 2020). Recently, parties have improved their ability to personalize targets with tailored messages that emphasize policy agreements or group ties to leverage support (Hersh & Schaffner, 2013; Holman, Schneider, & Pondel, 2015; Evans & Tilley, 2017; Abou-Chadi & Wagner, 2019; Thau, 2021; Stuckelberger & Tresch, 2024; Huber, Meyer, & Wagner, 2024; Stubager & Thau, 2025). Targeted appeals can match recipient characteristics (i.e., group affiliation or policy preferences) with the party. The effectiveness of appeals on building or intensifying partisanship depends upon prior matching between group and party. Partisans have a sense of who traditionally supports and which social group benefits from each party based on their early socialization process and party behaviour (Rahn, 1993; Ahler & Sood, 2018; Goggin, Henderson, & Theodoridis, 2020; Orr & Huber, 2020). Hence, the main argument of this dissertation is that parties can use targeted appeals to leverage support, priming partisan identity according to the prior association of policy or group identities with the party. In contrast, when there is a mismatch (targeted appeals to out-party groups) or nonmatch (without any group-party association), partisan identity becomes less relevant as an influence on behaviour. The TMP

is the first I am aware of that makes the connection between targeted appeals and partisanship in a series of empirical studies.

This dissertation has three empirical chapters, drawing upon cross-sectional data, panel data, and experimental evidence. The results offer strong evidence for the TMP in two longstanding democracies, Canada and the United Kingdom. These contexts represent cases where parties have distinct historical strategies, which contribute to different characteristics of the party systems and partisan alignments. First, Canadian parties have deployed multiple strategies to address, with valenced policy offerings, the diversity of group interests that exist in the country (Johnston, 2017). The strategy of accumulating diverse group interests to form winning coalitions has shaped perceptions of alignments and partisanship with the two main parties (Liberal and Conservative), while ideological positions have performed that role for the most established minor party (i.e., the NDP) (Bélanger & Stephenson, 2010; Clarke et al., 2019). Recent studies have demonstrated a growing alignment around each party and increasingly expressive outcomes between Conservative and Liberal/NDP supporters (Cochrane, 2015; Kevins & Soroka, 2018), yet without considering expressive and instrumental partisanship. The longstanding associations with class membership have characterized the British case (Evans & Tilley, 2017). Still, scholars have debated whether parties should broaden their associations to address other cleavages (e.g., Grant & Evans, 2024), while voters have demonstrated a significant dealignment with the traditional parties and polarization around Brexit (Hobolt, Leeper, & Tilley, 2021). When experimentally tested, class appeals remain powerful to move opinions and preferences (Robison et al., 2021).

This dissertation ultimately contributes to the research agenda about partisanship and parties by bringing together partisan reasoning and political competition. First, using two representative samples of the Canadian electorate, Chapter 1 examines whether expressive and instrumental partisanship are associated with perceptions of party behaviours. It also tests how well such ties can predict affective polarization, voting and motivated reasoning. Second, drawing upon panel data of British voters, Chapter 2 investigates whether class membership and partisanship interact with perceptions of class appeals by parties, exploring cases where those appeals suggest alignment with traditional class ties. Chapter 3 employs an experimental design to investigate the effect of a party targeting groups with prior associations on partisan identity. My dissertation concludes with a normative discussion about the role of partisanship and group representation in party strategies, and how it can shape divisions and engagements, the quality of representation, and civic competence when parties can target groups more accurately.

1.1. Literature Review

Partisanship was developed as a concept in response to a challenge in understanding vote choices. How do short-term factors interact with long-term ones in the decision-making causal pathway? In their foundational work, Campbell et al. (1960) connect these factors in a ‘funnel of causality’ by emphasizing the importance of partisanship in mediating other political variables. The so-called Michigan School claims that partisanship derives from early socialization and remains stable throughout life. In this vein, despite being surrounded by dynamic variables and salient policy issues, partisanship has been called the ‘unmoved mover’ because of its stability (Johnston, 2006). Further, partisanship is a ‘perceptual screen’ through which partisans develop attitudes and opinions on critical matters and

political judgments (Bartels, 2002), suggesting that long-term factors shape the way that short-term factors are interpreted.

Current literature on partisanship describes two main perspectives on partisanship: instrumental and expressive. Unlike the instrumental perspective, expressive partisanship is emotional, attached to self-image, and correlated with social identifications (Huddy, Mason, & Aarøe, 2015; Bankert, 2024). Partisans are more oblivious to new information, attached to prior identifications and constrained by group associations, so they rely on party cues to follow the party's positions. The evidence in surveys for expressive partisanship comes from a multi-item scale, first introduced in Huddy et al. (2015). Prior to that time, researchers were limited to the traditional measure of partisanship strength if they wanted to understand the emotional aspect of partisanship through an assessment of intensity. Assessing the strength of partisanship involved a unidimensional three-point question that followed the party identification question: "How strongly partisan do you feel? Very strongly, fairly strongly or not very strongly." Previous studies have even included the three-point strength measure in models to study the correlation between party behaviour and partisanship strength (Clarke et al., 2019; Lavigne, 2021; Dyck & Pearson-Merkowitz, 2023). But the strength measure is not without challenges. Studying this specific measurement, Blais et al. (2001) find that voters leaning toward a party hold related policy preferences more than weak partisans (the lowest rating on the strength scale). Finally, it is important to recognize that in the traditional partisanship measure the term 'feel' is used to assess the emotional aspect of partisanship; the Huddy et al. multi-item scale captures the expressive dimension of partisanship as a social identity with emotional and personal

elements with more validity and precision (Huddy, Mason, & Aarøe, 2015; Bankert, Huddy, & Rosema, 2017; Bankert, 2024).

Table 1.1 displays the multi-item battery used to measure the intensity of expressive partisanship.¹ Throughout this dissertation, this expressive partisanship scale is the primary dependent variable. Overall, this battery asks respondents about their emotional involvement when someone criticizes their party and whether they feel connected to their party when someone else supports it. Expressive partisanship is measured by combining these items, which reflect far more than “how strongly” someone feels toward a party. Across multiple outcomes, the expressive scale also explains a larger range of attitudes and behaviours than the traditional partisanship measurement (see Huddy et al., 2018, for a comparison of these measurements).

Table 1.1: Eight-item Expressive Partisanship Battery

Item	Question-wording
#1	When I speak about this party, I usually say “we” instead of “they”.
#2	I am interested in what other people think about this party.
#3	When people criticize this party, it feels like a personal insult.
#4	I have a lot in common with other supporters of this party.
#5	When I meet someone who supports this party, I feel connected with this person.
#6	When I speak about this party, I refer to them as “my party.”
#7	If this party does badly in opinion polls, my day is ruined.
#8	When people praise this party, it makes me feel good.

Notes: All items are combined to generate a scale that ranges from low (0) to high (1) expressive partisanship

Unfortunately, the available measurement is less consistent for instrumental partisanship, and there is no recognized multi-item battery. Bankert et al. (2017) measure instrumental partisanship using ideological intensity and leader evaluations, finding a

¹ The original scale has eight items, but the four and six-item versions also show precision and reliability (Bankert, Huddy, & Rosema, 2017).

weaker correlation with voting behaviour. As of this writing, the best option for measuring instrumental partisanship combines the preferences on policy issues, ideological intensity, and leader performance (Bankert, 2024).

Measurement is a crucial issue for studying partisanship, and an equally crucial question is how partisanship becomes more (or less) expressive. That is, how is expressive partisanship developed? Political competition and partisan reasoning are two alternative explanations for the level of 'expressivity' in partisanship. First, in cases of political competition, parties tend to emphasize their differences, which makes partisanship more salient. The Branding Model of Partisanship argues that policy strategy impacts citizens' attachment to the party (Lupu, 2013; 2016). Over time, these party strategies signal to supporters a brand, which indicates who votes for the party and who benefits from it. That is, brands represent the prototypical membership of the party. Partisans re-evaluate the brand whenever the party behaves against its brand, such as collaborating with a competitor. This party strategy decreases the influence of partisanship on behaviour, so party identification is less of a determinant of vote choice. Further, voters are vulnerable to taking cues from other sources beyond the party. Policy evaluations and other media can influence partisan attachments and, as a result, in-party voting. As the Branding Model suggests, partisan competition is a key aspect of the dynamics of partisanship and its influence on the attitudes and behaviour of partisans. It indicates that an alliance between competitors and a lack of historical differentiation could happen through many strategies and have repercussions for partisanship.

A central concern in the book that developed the Branding Model is the dramatic decline in voting for established parties in Latin America due to a lack of differentiation

and, consequently, the decline of partisanship (Lupu, 2016). In Europe, universal suffrage expanded participation for multiple groups and changed partisan competition, which recruited voters from social movements and working-class organizations (Boix, 1999). As a reaction, established parties adapted their approaches with the reform of institutional rules and broad agendas (Kirchheimer, 1966). The electoral success of this ‘catch-all’ strategy also forced other parties to broaden their agenda. Meanwhile, these countries also noticed a significant decline in partisanship and increased volatility in partisan voting (Evans & Tilley, 2017). Catch-all strategies overexpanded policy agendas, forging alliances that signalled moderations and blurred group-party associations (Katz & Mair, 1995).

Another instance of this lack of differentiation can be seen in the ‘brokerage’ strategy used by the two main parties in Canada. This strategy consisted of appealing to multiple interests across regions in the policy agenda (Cross & Young, 2002). Unlike the catch-all strategy, brokerage parties can appeal to opposing groups, involving policy offerings that address general problems with solutions everyone agrees on. In terms of the consequences of brokerage strategy, research has also shown that it decreases partisanship and weakens group-party associations (Cochrane, 2015; Clarke et al., 2019).

The second explanation for the development of expressive partisanship represents the psychological level of partisanship: partisan reasoning. Partisan media inform citizens about policy and group affiliations, framing opinions and priming predispositions (Bullock, 2011; Klar, 2013; Leeper & Slothuus, 2014; Tesler, 2015). Converse (1962) argues that mere exposure to partisan information enables citizens to hold a consistent opinion on complex issues. As partisans are more exposed to partisan information on average, they likely mimic the party elite's views, preferences, and behaviour. In the response-

acceptance-sample model (RAS), awareness is pivotal to the influence of partisan behaviour. The RAS model hinges on memory and accessibility to connect considerations, taking a ‘conscious route’ when processing such information (Zaller, 1992). To the extent that citizens pay attention to politics and comprehend what they encounter, awareness determines whether exposure to and acceptance of elite messages shape preferences. As volume increases, the likelihood of information being received and accepted by partisans depends on the direction of the information to be processed.

Further, partisan reasoning involves affect and emotions associated with political objects (Huddy, Mason, & Aarøe, 2015), but not necessarily associated with consciousness. A dual-processing model divides information processing into two systems (Lodge & Taber, 2013; Arceneaux & Vander Wielen, 2017). System 1 is unconscious, automatic, and effortless. Previous experiences, partisan identity, and other identifications are processed in System 1, uncontrolled by individuals, but decisive for preference formation. In contrast, System 2 is slow, deliberative, and effortful. Unlike System 2, System 1 charges and connects each piece of information with positive and negative tags. Partisan identity mediates the effects of new information from affect, motivations, and loyalties. Partisanship is significant because unconscious processing impacts the interpretation of new information and the subsequent behaviour.

The John Q Public (JQP) model explains how System 1 and 2 interplay (Lodge & Taber, 2013). The JQP posits that System 1 and System 2 contribute to preference formation, in which System 2 is often subordinate. Preferences have already been made or felt before citizens recognize considerations in their heads. Judgments are based on intuitions (or gut feelings), and citizens rationalize preferences to maintain consistency with

their intuition. When parties incorporate predispositions into their communication strategy, it facilitates the consistency between intuition and preference in partisan reasoning. This strategy might strengthen the implications of partisanship in processing preferences, making this partisanship 'more expressive.' Arceneaux and Vander Wielen (2017) suggest that System 2 can also influence System 1 in partisan reasoning. In their model, policy evaluations constrain not partisan identity, which is theoretically uncontrolled, but the impact of partisanship on behaviour. Individual differences significantly explain the deliberative process's capacity to constrain intuition. The combination of need for cognition (Nfc) and need for affect (Nfa) shapes attachments by indicating which process dominates in partisan reasoning. Performances may constrain the impact of partisanship whenever the party behaves differently than expected.

Combining the political competition approach with the partisan reasoning approach, expressive partisanship can be more prominent than instrumental partisanship when party competition emphasizes partisan motivation in the political environment. Motivations are internal processes of desired outcomes that impact preferences, emotions, and behaviours (Druckman, 2012). Depending on motivations, predispositions, or new information, partisan reasoning can prevail over accurate reasoning. The motivation for accuracy drives appropriate processing for a specific circumstance using new information. Conversely, directional goals are the desire for a result based on predispositions. Therefore, motivated reasoning predicts that the congruence between predispositions and new information results in rationalization to fit the latter into the established belief system (Leeper & Slothuus, 2014). Groenendyk (2013) adapted this theory to explain partisanship and affective polarization. Partisans must find considerations that justify their identity to maintain

harmony between responsive and partisan motivations. In cases where these two motivations conflict, partisan motivations decrease the intensity of partisan identity but compensate with hostility against the out-party. Therefore, the decline of expressive partisanship increases affective polarization because hatred overcomes likes.

This dissertation attempts to bridge the disciplinary divide between political competition and partisan reasoning by advancing a model of partisanship. A large body of research demonstrates the connection between expressive outcomes (i.e., motivated reasoning, in-party voting, and affective polarization) and partisanship (Huddy, Mason, & Aarøe, 2015; Huddy, Bankert, & Davies, 2018; Bankert, 2024). Nevertheless, the literature lacks answers for why partisanship and partisan behaviour look more expressive and less instrumental in contemporary democracies. The two explanations described above suggest that competition or reasoning can heighten the role of partisanship in public opinion. Party behaviour connects competition with reasoning, therefore making partisan identity salient or not. The TMP model explains under which conditions expressive and instrumental partisanship become more intense and the implications for behaviour from the perspective of party strategies. Therefore, three aspects are crucial to understanding the TMP model: i) the model assumes an interplay between instrumental and expressive partisanship; ii) it also assumes a top-down approach to partisanship, in which parties' appeals directly influence (and therefore precede) the intensity of partisanship; and iii) this model considers prior associations between groups and parties a key element that influence partisanship. Across multiple contexts, studies have highlighted the role of targeted appeals in leveraging support and emphasizing group divisions (Evans & Tilley, 2017; Abou-Chadi & Wagner, 2019; Thau, 2021; Grant & Evans, 2024; Stuckelberger & Tresch, 2024; Huber, Meyer, &

Wagner, 2024; Stubager & Thau, 2025). But appeals have yet to be considered a source of partisanship, nor have scholars been completely confident about the implications of targeted appeals on behaviour (e.g., Hersh & Schaffner, 2013). In the following pages, I elaborate on the three aspects of the TMP as part of the argument of this dissertation.

1.2. The Argument

1.2.1. The Interplay Between Expressive and Instrumental Partisanship

A serious consideration of partisanship requires an investigation of the interplay between its two variants: instrumental and expressive. In multiple studies, expressive and instrumental partisanship have been contrasted, despite arguments about their relationship (Huddy, Mason, & Aarøe, 2015; Huddy, Bankert, & Davies, 2018; Bankert, 2024). The TMP argues that partisans can simultaneously hold different levels of expressive and instrumental partisanship, predicting different outcomes. That is, the implications of expressive partisanship for behaviour may change when a partisan has more or less instrumental partisanship. Partisans in different circumstances can have favourable instrumental attachments compared to others. Bankert et al. (2017) find that the effect of instrumental partisanship is more significant in multiparty systems, helping partisans to differentiate parties across similar policy agendas. This difference suggests that the consequences of expressive partisanship on behaviour may differ in bipartisan and multiparty contexts.

Much more attention has been paid to how instrumental factors, such as policy and leader preferences, follow partisan identity (Carsey & Layman, 2006; Lebo & Cassino, 2007; Dancy & Goren, 2010). Previous studies implicitly relate instrumental and

expressive partisanship when describing the distribution or dynamics between preferences and partisan identity. First, the distribution of issue preferences relative to partisan identity produces a distinct influence on partisan behaviour. For instance, Lavine et al. (2012) describe partisan ambivalence as a conflict between levels of identity and preferences within partisan groups. As an implication, partisan ambivalence leads individuals to resort to heuristics from multiple sources rather than the party. Second, a dynamic change of identity results in a change in preference levels, and vice versa, which shapes the implications of partisanship. Arceneaux and Vander Wielen (2017) classify motivations into automatic and deliberative processes. They argue that deliberation about the rational aspects of attachments influences how partisan identity manifests itself, producing a more responsive and accountable form of partisanship.

In this dissertation, party strategy can alter the distribution of and dynamics between instrumental and expressive partisanship, resulting in a distinct impact of partisanship on behaviour. The TMP model considers both instrumental and expressive partisanship, which provides the advantage of addressing research questions by using a multi-item measurement for expressive partisanship. This dissertation also employs empirical techniques that consider the impact of strategies on expressive and instrumental partisanship separately, and the model includes multi-mediation effects of each partisanship on behaviour.

If the TMP assumption of interplay holds, different instrumental and expressive levels, in conjunction, result in distinct behaviour. The distribution of expressive and instrumental attachments may correlate with polarization, reasoning, or voting levels. Regarding the dynamic between partisanship types, the TMP model investigates causality,

considering the influence of expressive on instrumental, and vice versa. Therefore, empirical chapters apply this assumption to panel and experimental data, measuring changes in instrumental and expressive attachments separately, and estimating a subsequent change in one another. The empirical design considers techniques that assume an interdependence of attachments, as party behaviour can use policy alignment to emphasize group ties and social alignment to highlight a policy position.

1.2.2. Targeted Appeals using Group Ties and Prior Associations

Parties influence public opinion in multiple ways. They often inform citizens about policy issues and group alliances (Popkin, 1991; Bullock, 2011). Cueing messages like “the party supports this position” or “the party prioritizes this group alliance” helps citizens navigate politics, make accurate decisions, and hold politicians accountable (Lau & Redlawsk, 2006; Merolla, Stephenson, & Zechmeister, 2008; Dancy & Sheagley, 2013). In contrast, evidence also suggests that parties have influence beyond informational cues. Partisan rhetoric reflects expressive goals, shaping partisan identity and preferences on policy debates (Bisgaard & Slothuus, 2018; Bakker, Lelkes, & Malka, 2020; Chan & Stephenson, 2025). These messages can underpin political divisions, displaying hostility toward and rejection of the out-party's preferences (Nicholson, 2012; Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes, 2012). Thus, recipients can interpret sources and messages as more than information about politics through partisan “lenses,” reinforcing loyalties and contributing to expressive behaviours.

Among multiple strategies that parties can employ during campaigns or political debates, targeted appeals connect with the current communication environment. Rather than select a specific voter, targeting broadly refers to matching the appeal with the

recipients' predispositions (Petty, Luttrell, & Teeny, 2025).² The development of social media, which enables more partisan media and the enhanced capacity to collect information and craft targeted messages to individuals, likely changed the sense of partisanship in contemporary democracies (Dyck & Pearson-Merkowitz, 2023). In the digital age, political figures can efficiently build personal data resources and design tailored appeals, influencing political support more precisely. This informational environment allows party elites to be more precise and speak directly to social identities and policy preferences in segments of the electorate.

The advent of this targeted communication is co-occurring with increased perceptions of expressivity and centrality of social identities in politics (Achen & Bartels, 2016). Parties can use targeted appeals to speak closely to group ties and policy preferences, boosting partisanship and support. Unlike cues, targeted appeals have clear targets and matched motivations: particular policy issues and group ties (Huber, Meyer, & Wagner, 2024). Hence, the primary goal of targeted appeals is to persuade voters to support the policy, the party, and the group-party association. Targeted appeals emphasize group divisions in preferences, influencing group voting and polarization (Thau, 2021; Stubager & Thau, 2025). They can also enhance awareness of a party's social coalition, prompting supporters to manifest intense support when the groups associated with the party are positively evaluated (Mason & Wronski, 2018; Kane, Mason, & Wronski, 2021). In terms of electoral outcomes, however, the effectiveness of targeted appeals is unclear. While prior studies have demonstrated backlash for appeals due to electorate segmentation (Hersh &

² In this dissertation, the term 'targeted appeals' is interchangeable with group-based, policy-based appeals, personalized persuasion, tailored messages, or targeting. In all these cases, the concept refers to messages explicitly directed to a segment of the electorate that matches the message with the recipient's features.

Schaffner, 2013; Ostfeld, 2019), others have shown that targeted appeals persuade voters and polarize them (Robison et al., 2021).

Surprisingly, only a few models of partisanship explicitly indicate parties as a source and list targeted appeals as a strategy of partisanship. As instrumental partisanship is derived from alignments with policy preferences (Downs, 1957; Bougher, 2017; Orr & Huber, 2020), expressive partisanship reflects the cumulative alignment of social identities into a coalition (Mason & Wronski, 2018; Mason, 2018). Mason and Wronski (2018) argue that social alignments intensify identification with a party (p. 264). Such a result implies that people need to be already informed about group-party associations within the electorate. Whenever they know the alignment, it can heighten partisanship. Looking to develop a model that incorporates such a group-based assumption, Kane et al. (2021) propose the Group Sentiment Model of Partisanship (GSMP), in which expressive partisanship weakens or strengthens according to views on groups that are associated with the in- or out-party. For example, in their research, the authors manipulate knowledge about group-party association, informing survey experiment subjects about a group's support for the party. They find that expressive partisanship weakens whenever an unfavourable group supports the in-party, and expressive partisanship increases as the alignment between unfavourable groups and the out-party strengthens. Nevertheless, the role of a party is minor, party strategy is unspecified, and the impact on instrumental partisanship is unclear.

In general, I contend that targeted appeals can influence partisanship in two ways. First, as informational cues, targeted appeals inform partisans by signalling connections between targets and the party. Like the GSMP, targeted appeals increase awareness of group-party association and garner support through reciprocal affinities (e.g., group affect,

Huber, Meyer, & Wagner, 2024). In this informational approach, the key aspect of targeted appeals is whether partisans hold positive views of the targets. Second, targeted appeals can influence partisanship in a strategic way, by limiting the informational value of appeals (Iyengar & Valentino, 2000). Like the Branding Model, some groups have been previously associated with a party, so there is less effect from information about the association and more from the proximity to the party prototype. When considering previous associations, some groups may have less resistance to the appeals or have more credibility from partisans (Stuckelberger & Tresch, 2024). The consequence is that prior associations condition the effect of targeted appeals on expressive partisanship. Instead of informing, targeted appeals can prime predispositions (i.e., partisan identity or ideology) when targeting groups with longstanding associations with the party. Finally, prior associations likely impact the sentiments toward groups, since partisans prefer identifications already part of the group coalition (Egan, 2020).

Group-party association is pivotal for the effect of targeted appeals on partisanship. Based on the SIT, the intergroup approach highlights the need to belong (in-groups) associated with the in-party and the need to differentiate (out-groups) related to the out-party, drawing decisive lines between partisan groups (Huddy, 2013; Bisgaard & Slothuus, 2018). Partisans can identify which group has been part of the coalition before in targeted appeals based on stereotypes (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954; Green, Palmquist, & Schickler, 2002; Goggin & Theodoridis, 2017; Mason & Wronski, 2018; Goggin, Henderson, & Theodoridis, 2020; Amira, Wright, & Goya-Tocchetto, 2021; Claassen et al., 2021). Ahler and Sood (2018) conclude that voters' misperceptions about group-party associations are related to partisanship and polarization. Partisans often overestimate the

share of groups in their party coalition and support the party, regardless of whether they belong to or are part of the aligned group. Prior group-party associations can heighten partisan identity and expressive behaviour after targeted appeals, because they are pieces of information related to partisan identities.

The groups associated with parties vary across countries. In Canada, the Liberal Party has been traditionally associated with Catholics despite the secularization of Canadian society (Irvine, 1974; Johnston, 1985; Gidengil, 1992; Blais, 2005; Bélanger & Eagles, 2006). The first research about voting behaviour indicated a persistent association between this group and the Liberal Party. The Catholic-Liberal association is not based on religious candidates or policy-based representation (Gidengil, 2022, p. 919). Blais (2005) finds that partisanship is “part of the story.” When he added party identification to the model that explained the Liberal vote, Catholic identity reduced its influence. The author concludes that “Catholic support for the Liberal cannot be construed as a residual of the past, transmitted through family socialization. The religious cleavage is as strong now as it was forty years ago.” (p. 830). If TMP is correct, in-group appeal may stimulate someone’s reasoning to consider this longstanding connection, such as that of anti-environmentalists in the Conservative Party (Mildenberger et al., 2022).

Another traditional group-party association is the connection between the British Labour Party and the working class (Butler & Stokes, 1974). Recent observational evidence suggests that class divisions are less relevant to explaining electoral outcomes than other cleavages (Thau, 2019). Evans and Tilley (2017) argue that one explanation for this scenario is that the British parties have opted to appeal to another group instead of persisting in emphasizing class ties. Since then, research has cast doubt on the importance of the class-

party linkage, suggesting that British parties should leave class ties behind (Kitschelt, 1993; Grant & Evans, 2024; Thau, 2024). However, targeted appeals toward the working class have experimentally demonstrated powerful effects (Thau, 2021; Robison et al., 2021). As group-party association directly impacts partisanship (Milazzo, Adams, & Green, 2012; Evans & Tilley, 2012), perceptions of in-class appeals in Britain should boost expressive and instrumental partisanship.

Parties understand which groups are their core supporters and how to target them in appeals (Arceneaux & Kolodny, 2009). In the digital age, collecting personal data and social media facilitate the task of addressing targeted appeals toward these groups even more, based on the groups' traditional support. This can be an attractive strategy when the party is in difficult times or when the party is not in power, and recruiting support from such cleavages could facilitate access to power. By and large, using group ties that match with prior associations primes partisan identity. This sense of prior associations is developed through socialization, with people identifying who usually supports the party, and over time, with the party's targeted appeals. Due to political competition, however, traditional constituencies are not always the party's target. As parties react to the societal divisions responsible for the alliances they represent, they aim to win elections and bargain for support (Sartori, 1976). Hillygus and Shields (2009) find that parties can appeal to opposition groups using policy divergences for persuasion, stressing the mismatch between identity and preferences. From the ingroup point of view, this strategy gives a sense of mismatch for themselves, with the message in the opposite direction of their partisan identity. In this case, partisanship should decline or weaken.

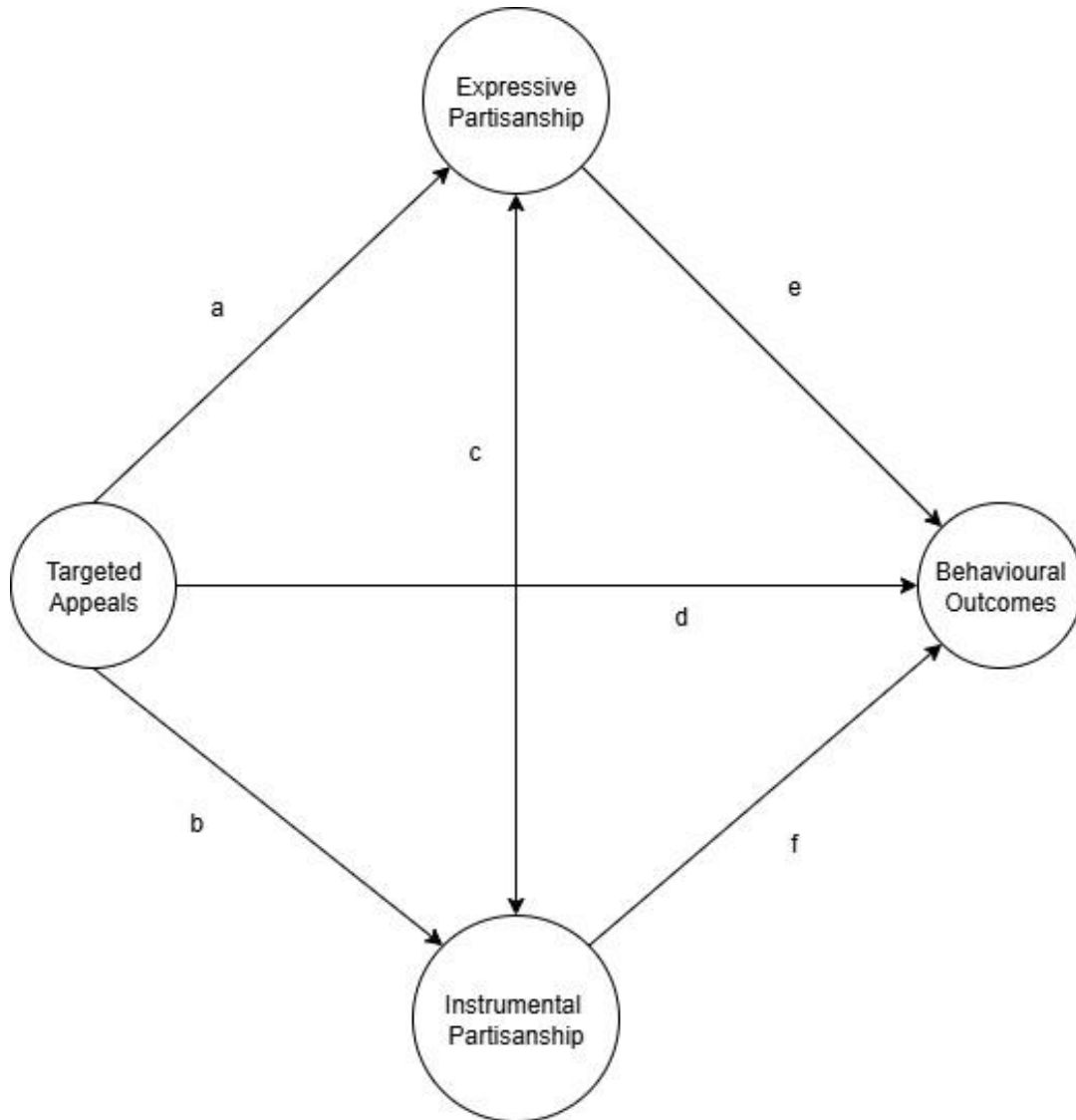
1.2.3. From Targeted Appeals to Behaviour

Building upon different models, the TMP model connects the effects of targeted appeals with partisanship. The causal pathway from the party to behavioural outcomes lies in the match between the goals of the party's message and the partisans' perceptions. If the goal is to mobilize traditional alliances due to low approval rates, it matches the partisans' identity. The model also specifies each perspective of partisan attachment through the pathway. As partisan identity is evoked, expressive partisanship may increase first. In addition, instrumental partisanship can increase when the goal is to inform about performance or policy achievements in critical issues. Instrumental partisanship can also influence expressive partisanship, since accumulating positive evaluations in the running tally may promote a sense of belonging over time. These pathways, which include direct and indirect effects through expressive and instrumental partisanship, produce distinct outcomes (i.e., polarization, reasoning, and decision-making) that can make politics more or less personal and emotional.

Compared to no appeals, the TMP model is not about the total effect of group cues on partisanship. Other models have already shown this effect in different contexts (Mason & Wronski, 2018; Kane, Mason, & Wronski, 2021). The TMP model aims to demonstrate whether group ties make partisanship more intense, personal and emotional. Hence, this dissertation decomposes the effect of targeting into direct and indirect effects (see the DAG in Figure 1.1 below). Targeted appeals underpin expressive (arrow a) and instrumental (arrow b) attachments according to prior group-party associations. Broad appeals, on the other hand, are generic messages that incorporate groups without previous association with

any party. Broad appeals signal inclusion and promote moderation (Somer-Topcu, 2015), representing a ‘non-match’ between message and recipient predisposition.

Figure 1.1: Targeting Model of Partisanship



Notes: The arrows represent the effects of targeted appeals on each partisanship and their effects on behaviour through these attachments. Arrow a corresponds to the effect of targeted appeals on expressive partisanship, while arrow b refers to the effect on instrumental partisanship. Arrow c represents the interplay between expressive and instrumental partisanship. Arrow d reflects the direct effect of targeting on behaviour. Arrow e displays the effect of targeted appeals on behaviour through expressive partisanship. Finally, arrow f represents the effect of targeted appeals through instrumental partisanship alone.

I classify targeted appeals according to whether they match or mismatch the perceptions of prior associations. Targeted appeals toward a party's traditional constituencies—groups whose associations are well-defined and the product of a longstanding relationship with a party—represent in-targeting appeals. According to the in-targeting hypothesis, these appeals reflect the match between targeted appeals toward a group and the sense of a prototypical association, which primes partisan identity, thereby increasing expressive partisanship. Since these groups are often associated with policy issues, in-targeting can increase positive evaluations from partisans, thereby increasing instrumental partisanship. Out-targeting refers to the strategy of expanding appeals toward out-party groups. Unlike in-targeting appeals, it enhances perceptions of a change in priorities away from partisan expectations, while promoting a shift closer to the opposition coalition. In the Branding Model, for example, such a lack of differentiation in policy appeals decreases partisanship. Likewise, the out-targeting hypothesis states that out-targeting appeals diminish expressive partisanship. A posteriori, partisans can continue to evaluate the party positively if they hold positive sentiments toward the group or about policy issues. Therefore, instrumental partisanship varies according to the 'running tally.'

One assumption in the TMP model is that expressive and instrumental partisanship are interconnected. When in-targeting increases expressive partisanship, the instrumental attachment also strengthens to justify the match between party strategy and partisanship (e.g., Groenendyk, 2013; Arceneaux & Vander Wielen, 2017). In-targeting positively affects both expressive and instrumental partisanship (arrow c). In contrast, out-targeting decreases expressive partisanship. Despite the possibility that instrumental partisanship remains positive due to the 'running tally,' it should lead to a relative decline to justify the

change in partisan attachment. Even if the outgroup is viewed favourably, instrumental partisanship is expected to decline. On the other hand, instrumental partisanship may also impact expressive partisanship over time. For example, broad appeals inform partisans about an association between the party and a new cleavage. After consecutive appeals to these cleavages impacting instrumental partisanship, it can influence the levels of expressive attachment (Bankert, 2024).

The TMP model considers the direct effects of targeted appeals on polarization, reasoning, and decision-making (arrow d).³ First, targeted appeals impact affective polarization, which refers to increasing favouritism toward the in-group and loathing of the out-group (Iyengar et al., 2019). Huber et al. (2024) argue that appeals using group ties “solidify and strengthen stereotypical images of politically marginalized groups,” and so “fostering strong group attitudes might therefore increase societal fragmentation and promote intergroup antipathy.” (p. 1315). Second, appeals favour directional reasoning, which indicates whether individual cognitive goals aim for a specific conclusion rather than an accurate one (Kunda, 1990). Leeper and Slothuus (2014) conclude that when parties match individual motivations, it evokes directional (or partisan) reasoning among partisan supporters. Third, the voting decision is the outcome most related to the consequences of targeted appeals (Hersh & Schaffner, 2013; Ostfeld, 2019; Robison et al., 2021). Thau (2021) demonstrates that group appeals increase group-based voting among targeted voters.

³ This is not an exhaustive list of outcomes. For instance, other outcomes can include participation, emotional reactions, and political interest. However, they are representative outcomes that the behaviour literature associates with party strategy and partisanship (Leeper & Slothuus, 2014; Lupu, 2016; Bisgard & Slothuus, 2018; Kane et al., 2021; Dias & Lelkes, 2021).

Besides the empirical tests of in- and out-targeting hypotheses, this dissertation explores whether partisanship mediates the effect of targeted appeals on these outlined outcomes. The TMP argues that politics become more personal and emotional when parties prime partisanship, influencing polarization, reasoning and voting (arrow e). Due to the nature of the research question, all mediation effects are based on comparisons between in-targeting and others (out-targeting and broad appeals). In-targeting primes expressive partisanship, by which partisans enhance the sense of belonging and differentiation from other partisan identities. As the context of targeting involves political competition, in-targeting appeals impact partisanship and delineate social and ideological differences across partisan groups (Dias & Lelkes, 2022; Orr, Fowler, & Huber, 2023). Therefore, in-targeting appeals increase affective polarization through increased expressive partisanship. Targeted appeals can also impact polarization through expressive partisanship alone, when appeals do not involve any policy dispute or ideological position. Further, in-targeting may impact motivated reasoning through partisanship. Despite awareness, Slothuus and de Vreese (2010) find that partisan appeals are critical to sort out partisan debate, as partisans are guided by the source rather than the content of the message. Therefore, the boost in partisanship from in-targeting diminishes the dependence on other cue sources and increases directional motivations. According to Huddy et al. (2018), motivated reasoning is the variable that contrasts expressive and instrumental partisanship. The most likely pathway is through expressive partisanship. In-targeting increases the likelihood of in-party voting by diminishing the volatility in voting decisions (Dassonneville, 2023). Through enhanced partisanship, in-targeting impacts voting. In this model, both expressive and instrumental partisanship (arrows a, c and f) can transmit the effect of targeted appeals.

The last pathway refers to the effect of targeted appeals through instrumental attachments alone. As mentioned, targeted appeals can impact polarization through instrumental partisanship (arrows b and f). The best example is Brexit identities in British politics. Leavers' and Remainers' identities have been measured on a multi-item scale similar to the expressive battery (Hobolt, Leeper, & Tilley, 2021). That is, it has the attributes of political identity, displaying emotions and personal attachments. In the last two general elections, Brexit identities have been decisive for voting decisions. Essentially, these identities stem from performances on this critical issue, as the instrumental perspective argues. However, whether this pathway can enhance directional reasoning remains overlooked, since instrumental partisanship seems incompatible with this concept (Huddy et al., 2018). In this project, the effect of targeted appeals through instrumental partisanship alone will be tested compared to the other pathways mentioned before.

1.3. Structure of the Dissertation

Each chapter of this dissertation explores one aspect of the TMP model: the model assumes an interplay between instrumental and expressive partisan attachments; it also assumes an active role of political parties, in which parties' behaviour influences the intensity of partisanship; and the model considers the differences among group-party associations that parties can use to prime partisan identity. When possible, the chapters examine more than one aspect of the TMP, despite the main emphasis. Empirically, the chapters also differ in the data structure and selected method. Hence, taken together, they provide rich evidence for specific aspects of the model and the TMP overall.

Chapter 2 examines instrumental and expressive partisanship, studying how elements of both attachments describe partisanship in the Canadian electorate. The TMP argues that individual levels of expressive and instrumental attachments are interdependent and predict the degree of polarization, reasoning, and voting loyalty. Using the 2019 and 2021 Canadian Election Studies (CES), two representative samples of the Canadian population, this chapter explores how perceptions of party behaviour, broad appeals and out-targeting are associated with the likelihood of partisan attachments. This chapter presents a systematic study of expressive partisanship in Canada for the first time, using two large and representative samples (Gidengil, 2022). The findings confirm that the interplay of attachments predicts distinct levels of engagement, and that the distribution of instrumental and expressive attachments changes when perceptions of party behaviour also change. Taking advantage of the Conservative Party's 2021 shift in policy positions, out-targeting appeals to more moderate groups on environmentalist views, this chapter finds that out-targeting decreases the likelihood of expressive and instrumental attachments between the two elections. The out-targeting, represented by parties' shifts in policy positions, suggests that the distribution of attachments correlates with the perceptions of party activities and strategies.

Political parties and class have been among the most traditional class-party associations described in the literature (e.g., Evans & Tilley, 2017). In Britain, experts have called for a broadening of appeals beyond class ties (e.g., Grant and Evans, 2024). In Chapter 3, I explore the dynamics between class, the British parties, and partisan identity. Expressive partisanship is a multitude of group ties, but some groups are more meaningful than others for priming partisan identity. Further, TMP posits that the effect of appeals to

class demonstrates how parties can actively boost or diminish partisan identity strength. Despite longstanding associations, Labour and Conservative parties have converged in policy offerings and broadened appeals beyond traditional class divisions (Thau, 2021), including new identities around Brexit (Hobolt et al., 2021). However, the TMP argues that broad appeals and out-targeting class appeals negatively impact partisan identity, while in-targeting class appeals enhance expressive attachment strength. This chapter relies on the British Election Study panel from 2021 to 2023 to explore the convergence of class appeals, conflict between class and party identifications, and appeals to traditional class ties. Expressive partisanship intensifies with appeals to traditional class ties. Moreover, perceptions of class appeals precede the intensity of expressive attachments. This chapter confirms that broadening appeals, beyond traditional class groups, diminishes partisan identity. Hence, parties that reconnect with traditional cleavages can potentially foster more intense attachments, boosting voting loyalties among supporters despite class membership.

Chapter 4 explores the foundations of expressive partisanship. Among several explanations for partisan attachments as a social identification, two models are noteworthy. First, the Branding Model of Partisanship emphasizes how political parties play a role in partisan identity strength (Lupu, 2013; 2016). Whenever parties highlight prior associations with groups that benefit from the party's policy, it intensifies partisan identity and voting loyalties. Second, the Group Sentiment Model of Partisanship (GSMP) argues that knowledge about group-party associations, based on sentiments toward groups, implies expressive attachment (Kane, Mason, & Wronski, 2021). This association enhances expressive partisanship whenever partisans know unfavourable groups align with the out-party. Hence, the GSMP relies on partisan polarization as the primary consequence of the

model. Using a survey experiment with Ontario residents, this chapter tests whether targeted appeals from parties can enhance expressive partisanship and intensify its impact on behavioural outcomes. I compare the effects of in-targeting and out-targeting to broad appeals. This experiment confirms the expectation that when in-targeting enhances expressive attachments, they, in turn, intensify polarization and increase the likelihood of in-party voting. This chapter suggests that prior associations between group appeals are pivotal to connecting party behaviour to partisanship in public opinion.

A final chapter offers concluding thoughts about partisanship and political parties in contemporary democracies. According to democratic theory, voters should be able to support a party based on their interests, and a party, in turn, should be responsive to voters' interests. This relationship between partisanship and parties reflects concern about civic competence, which questions whether partisans are autonomous in their forms of support (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996), and democratic governance, which is the capacity of parties to be responsive to public opinion (Soroka & Wlezien, 2004). If TMP is correct, in-targeting decreases autonomy and reinforces loyalties, which suggests a threat to democratic goals. In contrast, out-targeting and broad appeals enhance autonomy and deliberation, suggesting a desirable outcome for democracies. Nevertheless, unlike individual traits and motivations, the fact that parties can influence partisanship allows these democracies to manage personal and emotional behaviour.

2. Distinct Strategies, Same Partisanship? A New Categorization of Partisan Attachments

The prominence of the original conceptualization of partisanship has declined in recent years with the development of the distinction between instrumental and expressive partisanship (Huddy, Mason, & Aarøe, 2015). The instrumental model of partisanship refers to what has also been called the “running tally” model of partisanship, which emphasizes voters’ attitudinal attachments based on short-term judgements and assessments of social and economic issues, ideological intensity, and leadership performances (e.g., Downs, 1957; Fiorina, 1981). In contrast, the expressive model reflects a sense of belonging and a desire for differentiation from other groups (Huddy et al., 2015; Bankert, 2024). Unlike the instrumental model, expressive partisanship results in more profound involvement in campaigns, motivated reasoning, and stability of voting (Huddy, Bankert, & Davies, 2018), whereas instrumental partisanship relates to ideological polarization and policy preferences (e.g., Abramowitz & Saunders, 2006).

In the United States and a few European countries, expressive partisanship has been systematically compared with the instrumental model (e.g., Bankert et al., 2017; Huddy et al., 2018). Yet, in other countries like Canada, recent studies suggest that expressive connections with parties predict voter forms of engagement. For example, they indicate a growing partisan bias (Merkley, 2021), increasing affective polarization (Johnston, 2023), and emotion-driven voting (Lachance & Beauvais, 2024). Despite these findings, a serious consideration of the applicability of the expressive model of partisanship remains lacking in Canadian politics (see Gidengil, 2022, p.925). This chapter takes up this task by considering the nature of partisanship and the role that political parties play in influencing

how (or when) their supporters identify with them. Using a representative sample of the Canadian population, it is the first study to consider the expressive partisanship of Canadians and its consequences in two elections. The Canadian multiparty system gives an excellent opportunity to examine the heterogeneity of partisanship models. Its parties deploy multiple strategies like ideological moderation, cross-pressures, and shifts in policy appeals between elections, and these shape the instrumental and expressive components of their partisans' attachments.

Thus, this chapter advances two agendas of partisanship. First, I engage meaningfully with the dichotomy between the instrumental and expressive models to develop a categorization of partisan attachments that incorporates both models simultaneously. In multiple contexts, these two models have been dealt with individually, even though they both refer to the same construct: partisan attachments to political parties. Further, the systematic dissociation between the “running tally” and “unmoved mover” concepts of partisanship has created a simplification. All partisanship is not expressive, nor is it instrumental—both instrumental (e.g., preferences, attitudes, and evaluations) and expressive (e.g., identities) partisanship can be components of one's attachments, and their combination, in turn, can be meaningful by informing types of partisan-driven engagement (Lavine, Johnston, & Steenbergen, 2012; Kollman & Jackson, 2021). Therefore, this chapter explores intersections between models of partisanship and the likelihood of these new categories after perceptions of party behaviours. Second, although the majority of the literature investigates its consequences alone, I focus on the role parties play in fostering each type of partisanship attachment. This chapter looks at the effects of ideological

moderation and cross-pressures, often strategies employed to improve electoral conditions, which may also impact the nature of partisan attachments.

Drawing upon data from the 2019 and 2021 federal elections, I examine whether the categories that stem from combining instrumental and expressive partisanship predict forms of partisan-driven political engagement in the Canadian context. This novel contribution categorizes partisans based on their combination of instrumental and expressive partisanship—which I label ambivalent, attitudinal, personal and univalent—and predicts consequences for their forms of engagement. Testing for the behavioural effects of these four categories reveals differences between univalent attachments (high on both instrumental and expressive factors) and personal (high on expressive factors alone). Next, I test whether perceptions of party behaviours, such as moderation and cross-pressures, are associated with the likelihood of holding specific categories of partisan attachment. I find that moderation decreases the likelihood of univalent and attitudinal attachments (high on instrumental factors alone), whereas cross-pressures diminish the possibility of univalent and personal attachments. On the other hand, both perceptions increase the chances of partisans holding ambivalent attachments (low on both instrumental and expressive partisanship and the baseline for the models). Finally, despite similar performances in two elections, the Conservative decision to target out-groups in two policy domains in 2021—by adopting pro-choice and pro-environment views—led to more ambivalent attachments and fewer univalent attachments across anti-environment voters. This result suggests that party strategies led to distinct partisanship types and engagement among Conservative voters across policy lines.

Ultimately, this chapter has theoretical and empirical implications. It advances a theoretical framework for the interplay between partisanship's instrumental and expressive elements. While previous studies have treated these models as dichotomous and simplified how these factors interplay, this chapter pushes forward an empirical consideration of how partisans are distributed across and within these two models and the implications for engagement. In empirical terms, this chapter validates the use of the multi-item expressive scale in the Canadian case. Prior research has largely relied on traditional measurements of partisanship strength, which follow a party identification question in surveys, to capture strong ties to a party. The expressive model of partisanship returns a measurement that fits the original concept and provides a more valid measure of the sense of belonging to a partisan group, such that partisans report reliable emotional and personal connections in their attachments.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. Contrasting and Combining Models of Partisanship

Partisanship is a long-term psychological attachment to a political party (Campbell et al., 1960). Since the *American Voter*, scholars have debated the nature and consequential stability of partisanship. Initially defined as an “unmoved mover,” many studies have considered partisanship the most consistent predictor in public opinion (e.g., Bartels, 2000). However, two models have diverged from Campbell et al.’s formulation in explaining the nature of partisanship and its consequences, including stability. Based on a rational approach, instrumental partisanship (also known as revisionism; Brader & Tucker, 2018) reflects an attitudinal attachment developed from a “running tally” of the party’s and leader’s performances on critical issues (Downs, 1957; Fiorina, 1981; Abramowitz &

Saunders, 2006). On the other hand, based on social identity theory (SIT), the expressive model of partisanship refers to a personal sense of connection and in-group reputation (Green et al., 2002; Huddy et al., 2015).

The main distinction between these two models rests on the stability of one's partisanship. For example, expressive partisanship is durable, representing an intense and personal attachment (Green & Platzman, 2024). Partisans who feel a more substantial alignment between social identities and partisanship can have intense, expressive partisanship (Mason & Wronski, 2018). By comparison, instrumental partisanship can only be durable, given its attitudinal nature, if partisans feel motivated and enthusiastic about the party's short-term behaviour, defending issue positions and holding intense ideological stances (Groenendyk, 2013). Unless the party maintains its position on critical issues for partisans and the running tally is consistently positive, instrumental partisanship may erode.

The amount of scholarly attention paid to whether evaluations and attitudes follow partisan identity impacts assessments of the predominance of the expressive model of partisanship over the instrumental model (Carsey & Layman, 2006; Lebo & Cassino, 2007; Dancy & Goren, 2010; cf. Highton & Kam, 2011). In the United States, Huddy et al. (2015) contrast instrumental and expressive partisanship's capacity to predict forms of involvement from campaigns and emotional reactions to electoral results. Using multiple studies and different sampling techniques, expressive partisanship is shown to explain participation and the fear of losing elections. They conclude that expressive partisanship is "especially powerful" in explaining partisan-driven political engagement, more capable of "driving passionate behavior even among political sophisticates" than instrumental partisanship (p.15). In addition, studies in European countries (i.e., the United Kingdom,

the Netherlands, Sweden, and Italy) show that expressive partisanship predicts participation, in-party voting, motivated reasoning, and affective polarization (Bankert, Huddy, & Rosema, 2017).⁴

Most importantly, though, these results did not rule out the influence of instrumental partisanship on forms of partisan-driven engagement. Because partisans may achieve policy goals, Huddy et al. also find that instrumental partisanship is associated with enthusiasm. Despite suggesting the prominence of expressive partisanship, Bankert et al. indicate that instrumental partisanship has a higher effect in multiparty systems than in the US context, as policy stances provide more differentiation between multiple parties. In these studies, the expressive and instrumental measurements of partisanship show weak correlations and independent effects (Huddy et al., 2015, p.7). Although studies that contrast the models of partisanship recognize the interplay between instrumental and expressive partisanship (Bankert et al., 2017), empirical evaluations have been overlooked to date. Other studies have concentrated on empirical considerations to investigate how identification and evaluations interplay and shape partisanship, but without directly measuring the expressive and instrumental models.

Two frameworks emerged in studies that consider the interplay between identification and evaluations. First, a dynamic framework is one in which a change of political context results in a change in levels of policy preferences and/or party allegiance, thereby shaping partisanship as a result (e.g., Arceneaux & Vander Wielen, 2017; Lupu,

⁴ Bankert et al. (2017) measure instrumental partisanship as ideological intensity in the spectrum. They re-ran each of their empirical tests with in-party leader evaluations (0-10) and found a weaker relationship between this instrumental factor and political behaviour. In the original concept, instrumental partisanship includes both measures and combines leader and party evaluations and ideological intensity. Future research should be dedicated to building a multi-item scale similar to the expressive one.

2016; Kollman & Jackson, 2021). This framework emphasizes the balance between policy preference and partisan loyalty. For instance, instrumental partisanship may influence expressive partisanship through the initial attachment process, when voters prefer a party that matches policy preferences and then develop a strong sense of group sentiment and personal attachment (Bankert, 2024). Groenendyk (2013) predicts that partisanship responds to the balance of one's motivations, sometimes toward directional or accuracy motivations. Depending on the party's behaviour, partisans may hold an attachment that results from directional motivations rather than responsiveness, which has consequences for cue-taking and affective polarization. Second, a heterogeneity framework categorizes partisans and partisan groups into different levels of allegiance and responsiveness to party behaviour (Bélanger & Stephenson, 2010; Lavine, Johnston, & Steenbergen, 2012).⁵ Thus, the heterogeneity framework emphasizes different attachments in the electorate and their distribution within and across partisan groups. In this chapter, I focus on the heterogeneity framework to describe the proportion of voters across the models of partisanship, theorizing about whether this proportion may change based on perceptions of party behaviour between consecutive elections.

Until this study, none of these empirical frameworks (i.e., dynamic or heterogeneity approaches) considered the interplay between instrumental and expressive partisanship models specifically. Instead, they often focus on the convergence between party identity and evaluations (e.g., Lavine et al., 2012; Kollman & Jackson, 2021), not taking advantage of new measures of expressive partisanship. As initially formulated by Huddy et al.'s work,

⁵ At the aggregate level, partisans distinguish themselves in their levels of responsiveness to political information (Box-Steffensmeier & Smith, 1996) and the persistence of gaps in economic evaluations (Lebo & Cassino, 2007), as scholars find that partisanship differs in terms of "memory" of the effect of political events in their judgments.

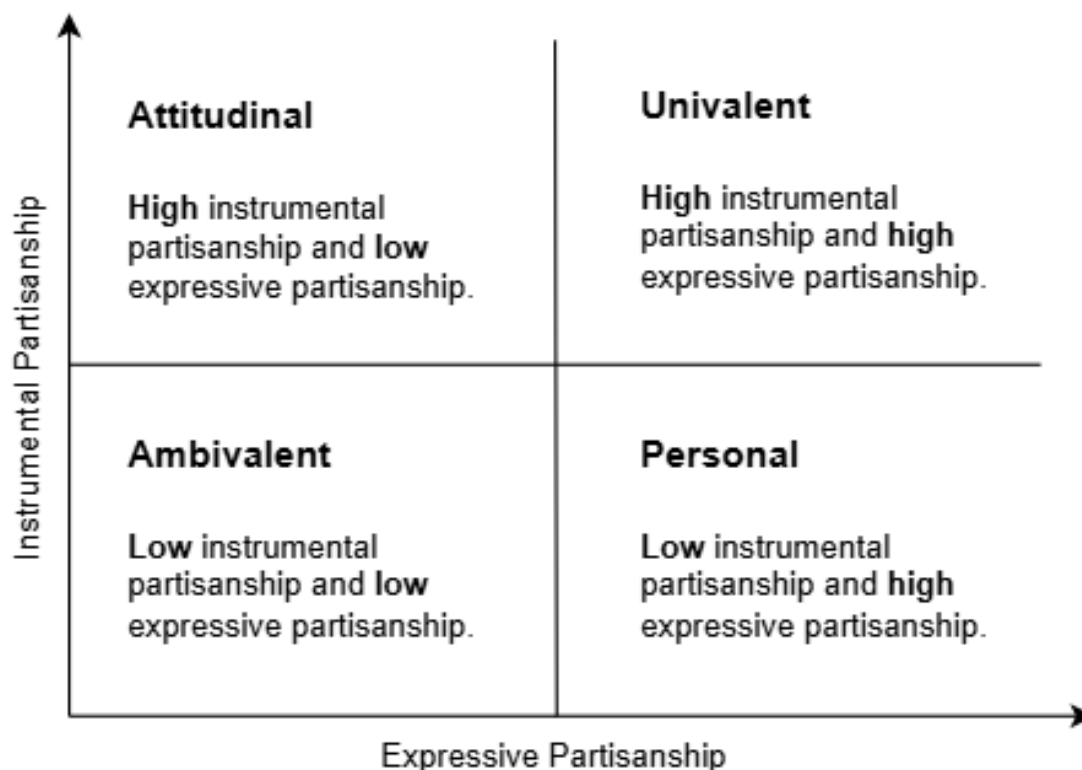
instrumental and expressive partisanship are not exclusive; high levels of expressive partisanship predict more partisan-driven political engagement than high levels of instrumental partisanship, but partisans can hold both simultaneously. I advance this argument by empirically testing whether partisans with high expressive partisanship differ on partisan-driven political engagement across levels of instrumental partisanship. Furthermore, I aim to test whether partisans with high levels of instrumental partisanship vary in political engagement across levels of expressive partisanship. Lastly, a significant empirical contribution is categorizing partisans with low or high instrumental and expressive partisanship and comparing their responses. This empirical evaluation allows this chapter to represent partisan heterogeneity across these models, predicting how they engage voters and also consider politician activities.

I categorize partisans based upon their level of partisanship in the instrumental and expressive models in order to tackle the empirical challenge of representing partisanship heterogeneity.⁶ Figure 2.1 illustrates the four categories of partisan attachments generated by the partisanship models. Across one diagonal, there is a higher level of one measure and a lower of the other: a) Attitudinal attachment refers to high instrumental partisanship that stems from ideological proximity, policy stances, leader's charisma, and favourable evaluations about the economy, but with low expressive partisanship that diminishes the sense of personal connection with the party; b) Personal attachment applies to high expressive partisanship, such as alignment between social identities and partisan groups, as

⁶ In the Supplemental Material, Appendix 4 empirically tests the association between these categories and partisan-driven engagement with different cut-offs (i.e., average, median and percentiles) for levels of partisanship. With more restricted levels of partisanship, the results remain similar in most cases.

well as low levels of instrumental partisanship due to less favourable attitudes toward the party's or leader's performance.

Figure 2.1: Categories of Partisans' Attachments



Notes: This categorization is based on the levels between scales of the expressive and instrumental models (Huddy et al., 2015). Empirically, the levels of both partisanship are defined by the average of instrumental and expressive factors in a given electoral year.

On the other diagonal, I combine the two partisanship models to simultaneously express whether someone is both high or low on instrumental and expressive partisanship. That is, the following categories represent equal levels of both models: c) Ambivalent attachment refers to partisans who identify with the party but neither feel personally attached (low expressive partisanship) nor attitudinally represented by the party's policy stances or performance (low instrumental partisanship); d) Univalent attachment applies to partisans with highly personal identification with the party (high expressive partisanship)

and attitudinal satisfaction with the party and leader's performance (high instrumental partisanship). In the end, each category of partisan attachment may predict different types of partisan-driven political engagement, from adverse consequences (e.g., motivated reasoning and affective polarization) to positive democratic outcomes (e.g., mobilization and attention).

This categorization of partisan attachments has two advantages. First, studies that describe the heterogeneity of partisan groups in a given electorate have not fully utilized measures available in the literature about the instrumental and expressive models of partisanship. Using a multi-item expressive scale, this chapter is better positioned to categorize partisans across the categories of partisan attachments, predict their impact on political engagement, and theorize about the role of political parties on each attachment probability. Second, these categories may predict distinct outcomes in partisan groups, reinforcing that both types of partisanship are equally important. In addition, it is possible to explore perceptions of party behaviours and whether one category of partisan attachment is more likely than others.

2.1.2. Perceptions on Moderation, Cross-pressures and Targeting

The role of political parties in partisanship models is integral and should be considered. Political parties are fundamental for democratic governance and mobilize voters by connecting predispositions, cueing policy stances and influencing voting decisions (Hillygus & Shields, 2009; Bullock, 2011; Leeper & Slothuus, 2014). They can directly persuade voters through appeals, using tailored messages that often emphasize attachments and differentiation of policy stances and group ties, thereby reinforcing the image of a party (Ostfeld, 2019; Huber et al., 2024). Political parties can distinctly emphasize policy or

group ties within the perceptions of the party behaviours, fostering better electoral performance. For example, Grossman and Hopkins (2016) separate the two American parties into an “ideological movement” and a “group coalition,” arguing that these motivations drive how voters of each party respond to their respective strategies and messages. Although differences in party strategies are part of an elite calculus in the political scenario, voters likely perceive to what extent competitors differ in policy domains and group coalitions and may adjust voting decisions and partisan attachments based on these perceptions.

In contemporary models, party behaviours involving policy offerings, ideological positions and emphasis on specific issues determine how closely a party is perceived to align with constituencies (Dassonneville, Fournier, & Somer-Topcu, 2023). However, whether ideological proximity or the policy offerings individually shape voters’ support remains unclear. When parties distance themselves from their supporters or align more closely with the opposition, they typically experience a decline in partisan loyalty before any impact on voting decisions (e.g., Lupu, 2016). Although these shifts might not directly impact immediate voting decisions, this effect on party support also occurs among partisans when a party decides to moderate its ideological stances. Somer-Topcu (2015), for instance, argues that broad appeals convince voters about party moderation and, as a result, affect the party’s support. On the other hand, perceptions of moderation, or voters’ perception of proximity among party placements on the ideological spectrum, might impact partisan attachments negatively. Lupu (2016) demonstrates that ideological moderation leads to brand dilution: the lack of differentiation of who benefits from the party’s behaviour. Brand

dilution affects partisan attachment before diminishing electoral performance, leaving the party vulnerable to adverse events and ineffective governance.

I argue that perceptions of ideological moderation are associated with heterogeneity among partisans in terms of their expressive and instrumental partisanship and, as a result, with their levels of partisan-driven engagement, such as motivated reasoning and affective polarization. Lavine et al. (2012) demonstrate that partisans become ambivalent when party behaviour and people's preferences diverge. In their book, ambivalence refers to the internalized conflict between identification and evaluations in which partisans eventually take cues from sources different from the in-party cues (p.3).⁷ In the branding model, Lupu argues that moderation influences partisan identity because it hurts the principle of intergroup differentiation. As party identity becomes weak, partisans will assess the party's performance based on the strength of prior partisanship. Despite their previous level of expressive partisanship, attitudinal and univalent attachments may decline since partisan voters are unlikely to feel served by the policy offerings (diminishing the chances of high instrumental partisanship). Therefore, perceptions of party moderation redistribute partisans from univalent and attitudinal to ambivalent attachments, with a higher likelihood of ambivalent attachment than the other three categories. This leads to my first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2.1: Moderation hypothesis: Perception of ideological moderation is associated with a higher likelihood of ambivalent attachments relative to other categories.

⁷ In the current study, I refer to ambivalence as a situation in which voters are low in instrumental and expressive partisanship, which might make partisans less mobilized towards certain types of partisan-driven engagement.

Hypothesis 2.1a: Moderation is associated with a lower likelihood of univalent attachments than ambivalent attachments.

Hypothesis 2.1b: Moderation is associated with a lower likelihood of attitudinal attachments than ambivalent attachments.

Another perception of party behaviour emphasizes cleavages, often including statements about groups that benefit from the party rather than stating specific policy domains. Since group coalitions do not rely on knowledge of policy details or ideological placements, these strategies can be effectively incorporated into electoral materials, thus making descriptive and social representations prominent in preferences (Campbell et al., 2011; Klar, 2013). The most well-known consequence of an elite strategy that uses group identity is social sorting, which means that identities are distributed among parties (Mason & Wronski, 2018). Recently, Mason and Wronski (2018) have shown that awareness of a party's social composition prompts supporters to adjust the significance of their political identity within the coalition. Thus, partisanship is closely tied to group dynamics and party behaviour. There are almost no cross-pressures within each coalition when social identities are sorted. Social sorting reinforces partisanship because the homogenous social coalition enhances a sense of belonging and shared destiny in politics.

Unlike social sorting, cross-pressures increase contradictory and opposing forces, resulting in a sense of belonging in conflict and a lack of differentiation across social coalitions (Brader, Tucker, & Therriault, 2014). Cross-pressure may diversify attachment within a partisan base, depending on the opposing forces within it. When party strategy emphasizes the mismatch between perceived alliances and the groups they represent, it creates tension between social and political identities, thus shaping the potential partisan

attachment toward ambivalent categories and depressing voting consistency among such a cross-pressured electorate. Yet, cross-pressures also shape partisan attachments and voting decisions differently. For voting models, cross-pressures increase volatility and, as a consequence, diminish the likelihood of in-party voting (Dassonneville, 2023). Although cross-pressured voters can change votes away from the in-party, it does not mean it will be done immediately. Cross-pressures make voters vulnerable to electoral campaigns and political events.

Therefore, cross-pressured partisans may hold ambivalent attachments that do not protect votes from campaign factors and fluctuations. Across the four categories of partisan attachments, cross-pressured partisans are less likely to present univalent and personal attachments on average. Due to the strong ties between expressive partisanship and a party's social composition, attachment categories with high expressive partisanship become more unlikely as the perceptions of cross-pressures increase.

Hypothesis 2.2: Cross-pressure hypothesis: Perceptions of cross-pressures are associated with a higher likelihood of ambivalent attachments.

Hypothesis 2.2a: Cross-pressures are associated with a lower likelihood of univalent attachments than ambivalent attachments.

Hypothesis 2.2b: Cross-pressures are associated with a lower likelihood of personal attachments than ambivalent attachments.

Moderation and cross-pressures may impact voting without any conditional effects; that is, no other factor divides the impact of these perceptions on partisan attachment other than ideological placements and demographics. However, political parties often segment

the electorate to intensify the benefits or isolate potential backlash. Party targeting informs a segment of voters about party affiliations and renders party brands (Hersh & Schaffner, 2013; Huber, Meyer, & Wagner, 2024). Since targeting implies reputation and elite pandering to a specific group of voters, it may encounter distinct effects across policy stances or social groups. Therefore, the conditional effect of party targeting rests on prior connections in party messages about policy stances and group affiliations. With targeting, policy-based appeals can be classified based on the existing relationship between the stance and the party. In-targeting refers to appeals made to voters with established connections between their policy opinions and the party that defends these stances. At the same time, out-targeting involves appeals to voters beyond existing associations, aiming to broaden alliances. Exposure to out-targeting, I argue, may influence the likelihood of partisan attachments across policy lines as they impact perceptions of expectations and differentiation from other parties' policy agendas.

As out-targeting means party appeals that deviate from the party's traditional issues as well as its traditional constituencies, the leaders miss the "reputational premium" of aligning their actual policy position with the consistent party position, influencing the nature of partisan attachment (Sniderman & Stiglitz, 2012). Out-targeting promotes shifts in perceptions of party brands and directly relates to the likelihood of partisan attachments. In addition, the effects of out-targeting may be segmented across the policy cleavage. Policy views will moderate the possibility of partisan attachment within a partisan group. Since the party is targeting other policy views, instrumental partisanship may drop as the evaluations of policy representation become less favourable. The expressive components will also become less prominent in the partisan attachment as the basis is more

heterogeneous and the partisan identity is less clear. This party behaviour means a tradeoff: out-targeting can boost electoral benefits by expanding the constituency, but likely enhances the ambivalent attachment of the remaining partisan base and decreases engagement. Therefore, the out-targeting hypothesis states the following:

Hypothesis 2.3: Out-targeting hypothesis: Partisans whose policy preferences differ from the party's new position will likely report ambivalent attachments compared to partisans with matching stances.

2.1.3. Case Selection: Brokerage Strategy and Partisanship in Canada

A longstanding debate persists about what partisanship means as a concept in Canadian politics. In early studies, scholars argued that partisanship is less critical in predicting political outcomes, such as opinions, involvement, and voting decisions (Meisel, 1973; LeDuc et al., 1984; Stevenson, 1987). On the other hand, others have posited that the original concept of partisanship travels well across borders (Elkins, 1978; Uslander, 1992). Recent studies in Canada suggest that partisan-driven attitudes predict Canadians' behaviour (Merkley, 2021; Johnston, 2023). Despite these findings, a serious consideration of the applicability of the expressive model of partisanship remains lacking in Canadian politics (see Gidengil, 2022, p. 925).

Party behaviours are fundamental to understanding the nature of partisan attachment in Canada. Brokerage is a party strategy that describes party behaviours accumulating diverse interests in the policy agenda (Cross & Young, 2002). In different studies, brokerage strategy plays a pivotal role in shaping the nature of partisan attachments among Canadian partisans as it undermines policy differentiation through partisan groups (Bélanger &

Stephenson, 2010; Cochrane, 2015). For instance, Clarke et al. (2019) argue that the intensity and consistency of Canadian partisanship are weak as parties have failed to deliver alternatives to each other's policy stances.⁸ Due to the brokerage strategy, therefore, Canadian parties lack differentiation as they have addressed issues in a valenced way: general societal problems that everyone agrees with must be solved. Consequently, they argue, partisan attachment alone does not predict attitudes and voting decisions. Instead of being durable, Canadians' attachments to parties are influenced by short-term factors, such as leader performance, campaigns and issues. For example, Fournier et al. (2013) attribute the success of NDP in the 2011 federal elections to its leader's charisma and the party's performance on key issues.

Policy stances determine how close a party is perceived to be to supporters' expectations, thereby shaping party evaluations and partisan preferences. Accordingly, taking sides in policy debates shows the concern and awareness of challenges facing the country, individual voters, and the party's constituencies. Unlike the brokerage strategy, some scholars have argued that parties in Canada continue to take sides and differentiate on multiple issues (e.g., Merkley, 2021). Although abortion is often considered a settled issue, Gidengil et al. (2022) find that Canadians are less critical of executive overreach if they agree on views about the issue topic. Such a result is more likely among Conservative partisans than Liberals, which suggests that issue agreement precedes partisan support with

⁸ Rather than responsiveness to the political environment, scholars have debated whether the flexibility of partisanship is due to measurement error (Clarke & McCutcheon, 2009). For instance, the absence of a 'non-identification' option for party identification led respondents with non-identification to select the meaningless alternative in those questions. Such absence has favoured instability over the endurance of party identification. To fix this problem in wording, surveys include 'usually,' which increases the personal aspect of partisan attachments to the question. Regarding partisanship strength, prior studies find that leaners evaluate a party better than weak partisans (e.g., Blais et al., 2001). This inconsistency has raised questions about the validity of partisanship strength as it has been measured.

undemocratic candidates. Another example is the debate about the environment in the Canadian public. Since 2008, much campaign rhetoric from the Conservative Party has been against the carbon tax, accounting for the fact that it has been another economic rather than an environmental policy. Mildenberger et al. (2022) have experimentally tested whether information about carbon tax rebate amounts enhances policy support. They find that information about tax rebates harms support, especially among Conservative supporters, due to their prior attachments. Partisan support prevails over personal economic interests involving the environment in this case.

Despite the brokerage strategy, different partisan attachments may coexist. There is evidence of expressive-type engagements. Scholars suggest that partisan attachments can be resilient to political scandals, which should have led to a change in attitudes if only instrumental considerations were in play. Examining the sponsorship scandal, for example, Gidengil et al. (2012) have shown that Liberal partisans neither evaluated positively nor voted for the Liberal Party. However, these partisans remained identified with the party. In addition to partisan resilience, studies find expressive components in party support. An instance is partisan-motivated reasoning (i.e., a motivation to pursue a directional conclusion that aligns with partisan identity), which is at odds with instrumental partisanship as it prevents the tally from being updated in the face of new information (and so there is no change in instrumental partisanship). Partisan-motivated reasoning is complicated to overcome through information and implies the resilience of attitudes and attachments (Matthews & Pickup, 2019).

Between elections, elite behaviour can sometimes favour more expressive or instrumental partisanship in partisan attachments. Recent studies point to Canadians'

increasing sense of belonging, reinforcing identities over cross-pressure preferences (Lachance & Beauvais, 2024). Reinforced identities reduce conflicts among social identities and policy preferences between partisans, influencing attitudes and voting decisions. By contrast, cross-pressures decrease personal attachment by diminishing alignment between identities within partisan groups (Dassonneville, 2023). While the sense of belonging is growing, the policy gap is also increasing among Canadian partisans. Cochrane (2015) argues that Canadian voters noticed this gap in ideological terms and oriented themselves accordingly. As a result, partisan groups are increasingly homogeneous and sorted around policy preferences (Kevins & Soroka, 2018). Since the policy gap distinguishes one party's policy agenda from the other and increases brand clarity in the party system, partisan attachments should become attitudinal. Both reinforcing identities and policy gaps can promote affective polarization through partisanship, as partisans may perceive threats to policy and ideological positions from electoral and political disputes (Johnston, 2023).

Part of my argument is that parties' messaging can play a role in partisan attachments, as precise statements can target segments of the electorate and shape party brands (Lavigne, 2021). In Canada, individual parties often shift their targets from one election to another. Canada represents a good case for this consideration, as parties are less constrained by shifting policy offerings between elections as part of their strategies (Johnston, 2017), so the strategies they adopt may shape their partisan attachments in the electorate. In many contexts, shifts in key policy domains are sporadic, but in Canada, they have been a frequent strategy. When a party targets groups and policy stances outside the traditional constituencies, I call this an out-targeting strategy. Out-targeting can influence

perceptions of party brands without relying on a contextual feature, such as polarization or cleavages. Their influence depends upon the policy views of the partisans from the out-targeted segments. Political parties often target specific constituencies as they see opportunities to advance in segments or perceive threats from other parties toward that particular segment of the electorate. Out-targeting represents an opportunity to advance through a broader audience or redefine the image of oppositional constituencies in the electorate. The out-targeting strategy has consequences beyond the electoral payoffs: it can shape partisan attachments by changing perceptions of the party itself in the out-targeted voters.

Between 2019 and 2021, the Conservative Party and its leadership changed their targets in two policy domains: abortion and the environment. The out-targeting strategy was to adopt policy stances that appealed to out-group positions, such as pro-choice and pro-environment voters in 2021. Unlike former Conservative leader Andrew Scheer, Erin O'Toole (2021 Conservative Party leader) aligned with pro-choice views before the election,⁹ even though most pro-life voters align with the Conservative Party relative to other parties. Between these two elections, the Conservative leaders also had different positions about the carbon tax and other environmental policies intended to reduce emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change. In 2021, the party manifesto and its leader targeted voters with pro-environment views and endorsed forms of a carbon tax in its policy offerings.¹⁰ Similar to the abortion issue, most anti-environment voters prefer the

⁹ See Andrew Scheer targeting pro-life supporters in ['I am personally pro-life,' Scheer says, vowing not to re-open abortion debate | CBC News](#). Erin O'Toole targeted pro-choice in ['I'm pro-choice,' O'Toole says as abortion issue emerges on the campaign trail | CBC News](#).

¹⁰ Erin O'Toole targeted pro-environment voters with their idea for a carbon tax: [How Conservatives came around to supporting a carbon tax — and whether it's here to stay | CBC News](#) and [Canada's main opposition party switches climate change policy, backs carbon pricing | Reuters](#).

Conservative Party, so this is a clear change. I expect that abortion and environmental views will moderate the likelihood of partisan attachments to the Conservative Party in 2021. Accordingly, pro-life and anti-environmentalist conservatives should increase the probability of ambivalent attachments during the election when the party shifts its policy position to out-group views.

2.2. Data and Measurement

To test these three hypotheses, this chapter relies on the 2019 (N = 37,822) and 2021 (N = 20,968) Canadian Election Studies (Stephenson et al., 2020; 2022). Using the traditional measure of party identification employed in the CES, around 83% in 2019 and 80% in 2021 identify as having any party preference.¹¹ Partisanship strength is consistent between the two years. Strong partisans stayed at 28% in both years, and fairly strong partisans comprised 54% and 53% of partisans, respectively. About 17% and 18% are weak partisans each year. In [Appendix 1](#), Table A1 reports the distribution of partisanship strength by partisan groups since it represents how scholars have previously measured stronger and emotional ties among Canadian voters.

To the best of my knowledge, this study is the first to fully exploit the multi-item expressive scale using the CES to capture the representative sample of this model of partisanship among Canadians (see also Stephenson, 2022). The expressive scale increases the stability of the measurement and its validity in capturing the emotive element of partisan

¹¹ Party identification question refers to the standard question about the direction of the respondent's preference, which reads: "In **federal** politics, do you usually think of yourself as a Liberal, Conservative, NDP, Bloc Québécois (only for Quebec), Green, another party, none of these, and don't know/prefer not to answer." First, I excluded non-partisans from the analysis due to the focus on partisan mobilization. Second, I removed the People's Party respondents from this analysis because it was presented as an alternative in the 2021 post-election survey (PES) period instead of present in the campaign period survey (CPS) in both years. Third, I removed the Bloc partisans as the option was presented only for Quebec residents.

attachments (e.g., Bankert et al., 2017; Bankert, 2024). For instance, throughout its items, the expressive scale asks about the respondent's emotional involvement when someone criticizes the party and whether respondents feel connected to the party when someone supports it, too. This scale, therefore, provides a more accurate picture of partisans' expressive partisanship than the traditional measure of partisanship strength. [Appendix 2](#) compares the expressive scale and traditional measurement, finding that the former predicts a broader range of values across forms of partisan-driven engagement. Additionally, I combine a series of evaluations of parties and leaders to build instrumental partisanship, as to date there is no single way to measure instrumental partisanship established in the literature. Following Bankert (2024), the items of instrumental partisanship use positions on the electoral system, cannabis, euthanasia, carbon tax, energy sector, regulation, jobs, free trade, and subsidies.¹² In addition, I sum ideological intensity, in-party leader evaluation (i.e., feeling thermometer in which 0 means dislike and 100 means like) and retrospective evaluations of the economy.

Table 2.1 presents these items used to measure both types of partisanship. Each item has four points for the expressive scale, ranging from never (1) to always (4).¹³ At the bottom of the first column ($\alpha = 0.84$ and 0.83 , respectively), the expressive scale shows good consistency each year.¹⁴ On the other hand, the instrumental partisanship is less consistent ($\alpha = 0.32$ and 0.46), with the value shown at the bottom of the second column. I

¹² Respondents were randomly asked about issue positions in the CES according to nine relevant policies. In 2019, only three out of nine questions were presented for each respondent. In 2021, five out of nine questions were asked. Despite these differences in policy questions, instrumental factors in both years had similar distribution and correlation with the expressive factors.

¹³ The original scale has eight items, including the expressive scale (see Huddy, Mason, & Aaroe, 2015). However, the four-item version remains precise and reliable (Bankert, Huddy, & Rosema, 2017).

¹⁴ I run a structural model that includes the four items of the multi-item scale and the language of the survey. In [Appendix 3](#), Tables C1 and C2 detail the result of this measurement invariance test.

rescale the points to vary between low (0) and high (1) instrumental/expressive partisanship and build the four categories by dividing each by the average of each scale for each election. Doing this in 2019, 28% of partisans are categorized as ambivalently attached (both lower than the average partisanship), 22% are attitudinal and personal (either lower or higher than the average in each partisanship), and 28% are univalent attached to their party (both higher than the average). In 2021, 29% are ambivalent, 23% and 22% are attitudinal and personal attached, respectively, and 26% are univalent attached to their party.

Table 2.1: Multi-item Expressive and Instrumental Scales

Item	Question-wording	
PID	Expressive	Instrumental
#1	When people criticize this party, it feels like a personal insult.	Personal stances on critical issues.
#2	When I meet someone who supports this party, I feel connected with this person.	Ideological intensity (0-10).
#3	When I speak about this party, I refer to them as “my party.”	In-party leadership evaluation (0-100).
#4	When people praise the party, it makes me feel good.	Retrospective economic evaluation.
\bar{x} (S.E.)	.325 (.002)	.52 (.002)
$\alpha_{CES2019}$.84	.32
$\alpha_{CES2021}$.83	.46

Notes: All items were combined to generate a scale that ranges from low (0) to high (1). Table A2 displays the distribution by item (see [Appendix 1](#)). For the typology, I combine both scales between the averages.

Ideological moderation and cross-pressures are two other factors associated with perceptions of party behaviours that may impact partisan attachments. First, I consider the dispersion of individual parties’ ideological placements to measure the perceived moderation of ideological positions (0-10). As these parties vary in electoral prominence in each election, I weighted the standard deviation of ideological placements by voting share

in the present year.¹⁵ Therefore, in a given election, the lower the dispersion, the higher the moderation perceived.¹⁶ Second, based on Brader et al. (2014), I calculate the individual cross-pressure score, as it reflects how voters' demographics push them in multiple directions in consideration and judgments, including partisanship.¹⁷ I begin by including sociodemographics (i.e., gender, age, education, region, income, and religion) and individual ideological positions in a multinomial logit model to predict vote choice each year.¹⁸ The predicted probabilities in these models are used to create a score that indicates how cross-pressured a voter is based on these variables. Ideological moderation and cross-pressure scores are rescaled to vary between 0 and 1.

The following sections will analyze moderation, cross-pressures, and targeting to predict the likelihood of partisan attachments in Canada. I begin by examining the behaviour of each attachment category that predicts forms of partisan-driven engagement (i.e., political attention, participation, motivated reasoning, in-party voting, and affective polarization). I examine whether categories differ in the levels of engagement. To test my hypotheses, I investigate how moderation, cross-pressures and targeting relate to attachment types, comparing between the 2019 and 2021 elections. I run a multinomial logit (MNL) that returns the likelihood of each attachment when moderation or cross-

¹⁵ I also accounted for the number of placements respondents reported in each survey.

¹⁶ For perceived moderation, I used the following formula: $\sigma_w = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^n w_i (x_i - \bar{x}_w)^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n m_i}}$, where w_i refers to the weight (voting share in the electoral year) for the i -th observation to weight more the ideological distribution according to the prominence of the party across elections, \bar{x}_w indicates the weighted mean for ideological positions, m_i means the number of parties placed by i -th observation. I reverse the scale to reflect moderation instead of polarization. Finally, the weights aim to avoid extremist small parties returning high perceived polarization (e.g., Lupu, 2016).

¹⁷ Brader et al. (2014) eventually compare the cross-pressure scores with party identification and vote choice with similar results.

¹⁸ Following Lachance and Beauvais (2024), I included ideological position since they demonstrate that ideology also generates a group affect and explains voting decisions among Canadians.

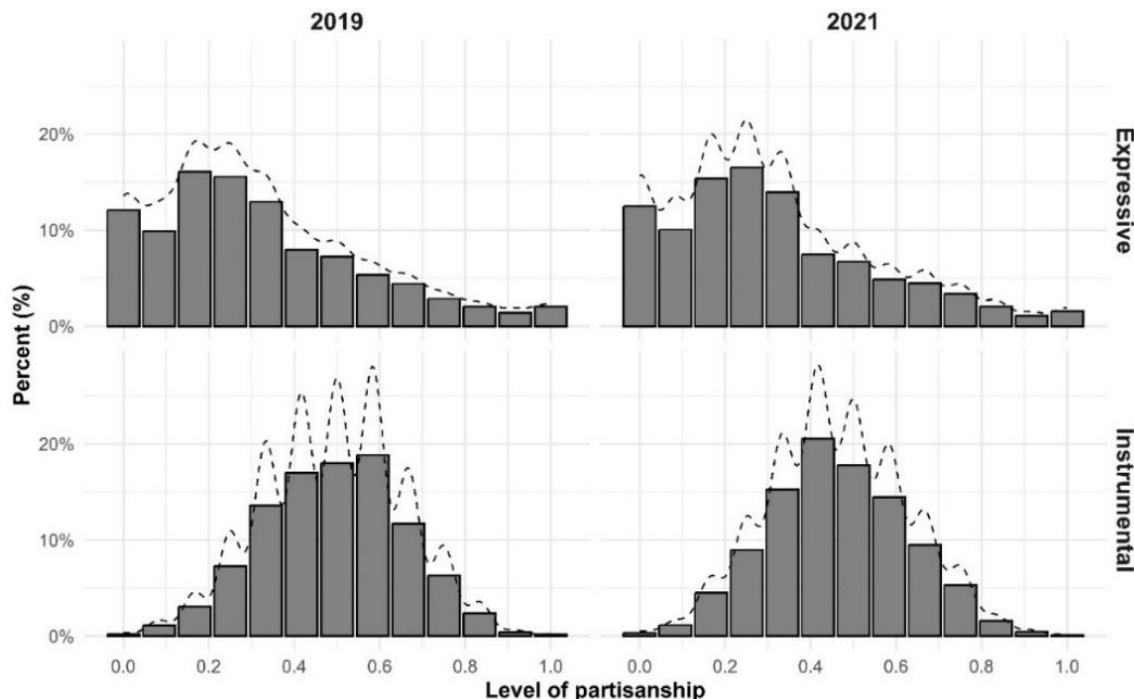
pressure is high. Finally, focusing on the change in Conservative strategy between 2019 and 2021, I examine how out-targeting relates to partisanship. I compare partisan attachments in two policy domains that shifted between 2019 and 2021: abortion and the environment. In an MNL, I examine whether attitudes on these two policy domains moderate the relationship between Conservative identification and attachment categories developed in the electoral campaign.

2.3. Results

2.3.1. Predicting Behaviour with Attachment Categories

I begin this analysis by describing the distribution of the two measures of partisanship that form partisan attachment categories. Figure 2.2 illustrates the distribution of both models among all partisans (measured by the traditional CES measure) in the two federal elections. On average, partisans report lower levels of expressive partisanship ($\bar{x} = 0.32$, s.e. = 0.002) than instrumental partisanship. In addition, the distribution of instrumental partisanship is less skewed than the distribution of expressive partisanship. In the bottom panels, the distribution suggests a slight overall decline ($\bar{x} = 0.53$; s.e. = 0.002 and $\bar{x} = 0.50$; s.e. = 0.003, respectively).

Figure 2.2: Distribution of Partisanship by Electoral Year



Notes: Expressive partisanship is a 4-item scale (e.g., Bankert, Huddy, and Rosema, 2017). This measurement was combined and rescaled to vary between 0 and 1. Instrumental partisanship includes policy stances, leader performance, economic evaluation, and ideological position (e.g., Bankert, 2024). This measurement was also combined and rescaled to vary between 0 and 1. The dotted lines represent the density curve of each distribution.

Looking at the specific categories, the two categories with low expressive partisanship (i.e., ambivalent and attitudinal attachments) comprised 53% of partisans. Table 2.2 below reports the averages of partisans across the two attachments. The Conservative Party has significantly decreased in expressive partisanship ($\bar{x} = 0.33$; s.e. = 0.005; and $\bar{x} = 0.31$; s.e. = 0.007). The Green Party has the highest level of instrumental partisanship, followed by the NDP. Conversely, the results for the Liberal Party ($\bar{x} = 0.54$; s.e. = 0.003; and $\bar{x} = 0.49$; s.e. = 0.004) and the Conservative Party ($\bar{x} = 0.51$; s.e. = 0.003; and $\bar{x} = 0.49$; s.e. = 0.004) also suggest a decline in instrumental partisanship. In [Appendix 1](#), Table A3 reports the distribution of partisanship types by identification and election. In both years, while most NDP partisans hold univalent attachments (30% and 33%), Liberal

partisans had the highest rate of partisans in the ambivalent attachments (30% and 34%). In the four categories of partisan attachments, the Conservatives increased the percentage of ambivalent and attitudinal attachments (50% to 54%) between years. In 2021, only 43% of Liberal partisans hold attitudinal or univalent attachments, while 46% of Conservative partisans hold one of these attachment categories.

Table 2.2: Average of Attachments by Identification

	Conservative	Green	Liberal	NDP
The 2019 elections				
Expressive	0.331	0.362	0.294	0.351
Instrumental	0.512	0.566	0.542	0.544
The 2021 elections				
Expressive	0.315	0.303	0.300	0.339
Instrumental	0.492	0.553	0.492	0.545

Notes: Entries are averages. The direction of partisanship (or identification) is determined by a standard question, which reads: "In federal politics, do you usually think of yourself as a:".

Next, like Huddy et al. (2015), I select different forms of partisan-driven political engagement (i.e., political attention, participation, motivated reasoning, in-party voting, and affective polarization) and compare the predictive power of each partisan attachment category.¹⁹ The goal is to determine whether the four categories of partisan attachments predict different behaviour outcomes, suggesting that the interplay between expressive and

¹⁹ These outcomes were selected based on previous studies of expressive partisanship (e.g., Huddy, Bankert, & Davies, 2018). Future research should explore additional outcomes to balance the likelihood that instrumental partisanship explains such outcomes alone.

instrumental matters. Otherwise, if there are no differences across categories, the joint combination of attachments explains too little about partisan behaviour. In this case, either expressive or instrumental partisanship is sufficient to explain the outcome. I examine whether these categories explain different levels of each partisan-driven engagement through separate models. Except for in-party voting, I estimate the probabilities of each category using linear models with several controls.²⁰ I rescale continuous variables to range between 0 and 1 to facilitate interpretation.²¹ I calculate the effect of each category of attachment and the following forms of engagement in 2021: a) attention to campaigns varies from *not much at all* (0) to *a lot* (1); b) multiple items of participation in meetings, boycotts, protests, and petitions, varying from *never* to *more than five times* (0-1, $\alpha = 0.69$); c) wishful thinking in the form of the respondent's confidence in the preferred party winning the most seats in the upcoming election (0-1);²² d) in-party voting, the convergence between party preference and vote choice (0 or 1); and e) affective polarization, the dispersion on party evaluations across feeling thermometers.²³

Figure 2.3 displays the predicted probabilities of categories across the forms of engagement. The four categories of attachments predict different levels, which suggests that this categorization is functional. Except for motivated reasoning, people with

²⁰ Demographics include i) party identification; ii) gender; iii) age; iv) education; v) region; vi) Catholic; vii) francophone. All these variables were standardized to vary from 0 to 1. I run a logistic model to estimate the effect of attachments on the probability of in-party voting.

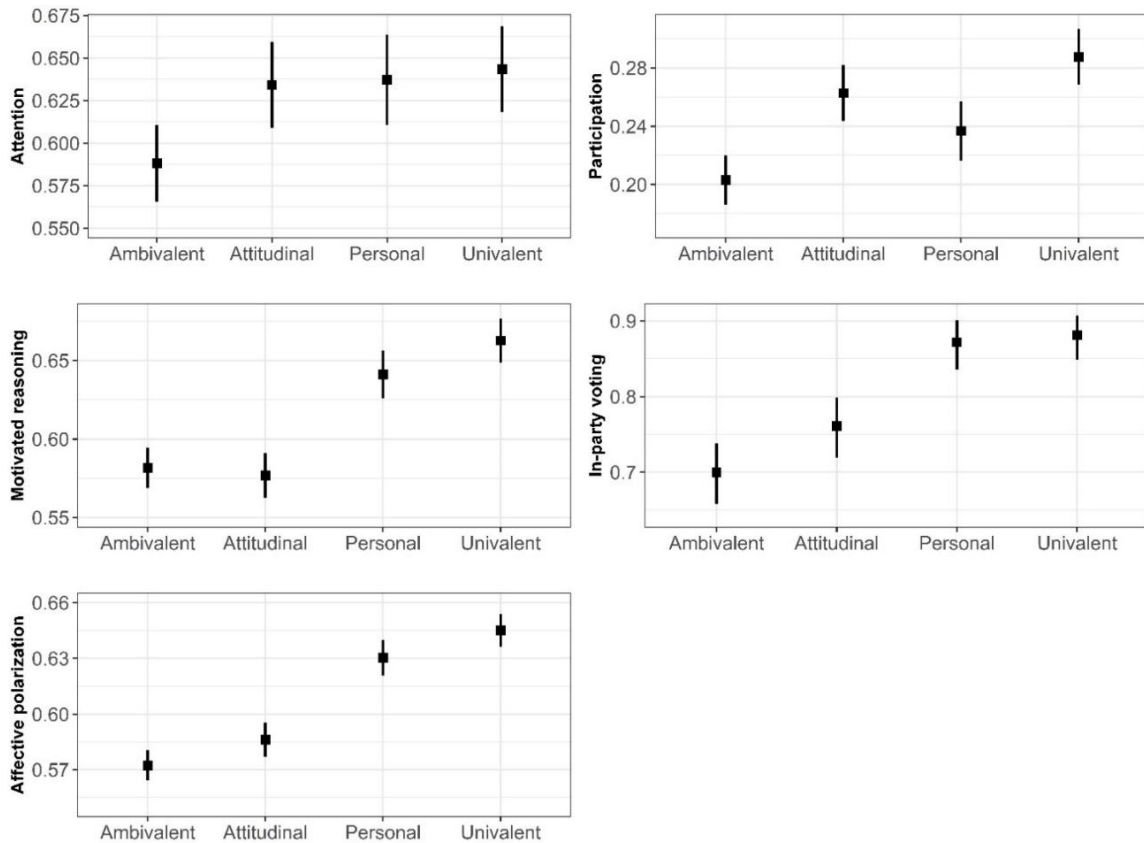
²¹ Previous studies include partisanship strength to represent the intensity of partisan ties (e.g., Clarke et al., 2019; Lavigne, 2021). In [Appendix 2](#), I contrast instrumental and expressive models with traditional measurements of partisanship strength.

²² This question was used to measure motivated reasoning by Huddy et al. (2018). Furthermore, this question wording also aligns with the concept of wishful thinking (Blais & Turgeon, 2004). In this project, therefore, I use these two terms interchangeably.

²³ Again, I calculated this dispersion across thermometers, weighting by the vote share in the election, since I aim to avoid minor parties influencing the perceptions of affective polarization in the Canadian party system.

attitudinal, personal and univalent attachments significantly differ from ambivalent attachments in forms of political engagement ($p < 0.05$).²⁴ For wishful thinking, people with ambivalent and attitudinal attachments do not statistically differ ($\beta = -0.005$, CI 95% [-0.02; 0.01], $p = 0.62$). As expected, levels of wishful thinking—measured by the confidence that one’s preferred party will win the most seats—are better predicted by people with personal or univalent attachments ($p < 0.05$), as those categories are high in expressive partisanship. Interestingly, people with univalent attachments predict higher values of wishful thinking than those with personal attachments ($\beta = 0.02$, CI 95% [0.001; 0.04], $p < 0.05$).

²⁴ This finding suggests that ambivalent attachment is a good baseline for the MNL models. Recognizing that these models’ coefficients rely heavily on the baseline, the ambivalent category has both theoretical (i.e., lower levels of partisanship) and empirical reasons to serve as the baseline.

Figure 2.3: Predictive Probabilities across Partisan Attachments

Notes: Values represent predicted probabilities of partisan-driven engagement with all other variables at their sample means. Confidence intervals are 95%. All variables were standardized to vary between 0 and 1. The models include demographics, such as gender, age, education, region, religion, and linguistic group. These models contain political interest. [Appendix 4](#) estimates the same models with different cut-offs for the four categories.

Some findings deserve comment about the distinction between attachment categories other than ambivalent ones. First, political participation and attention are singular because there are no differences between attitudinal and personal attachments. For political participation, attitudinal and personal attachments do not statistically differ ($\beta = -0.03$, CI 95% [-0.05; 0.02], $p = 0.07$), nor do univalent and attitudinal attachments ($\beta = 0.02$, CI 95% [-0.002; 0.05], $p = 0.07$). Second, in affective polarization, all categories statistically differ from each other. Most importantly, univalent attachments predict the highest level of affective polarization and vary from personal attachments ($\beta = 0.02$, CI

95% [0.002; 0.03], $p < 0.05$). This difference suggests that instrumental partisanship is a relevant distinction between the two attachments with high expressive partisanship. Finally, other than ambivalent attachments, all other categories do not distinguish themselves from each other in political attention. Each category predicts a similar level of attention to politics, regardless of the nature of partisanship involved in such a category. Therefore, combining expressive and instrumental partisanship returns an interesting measure that predicts different levels of partisan-driven engagement and differentiates partisans along instrumental/expressive categorizations.

2.3.2. Perceived Behaviour: Moderation and Cross-pressures

This section investigates whether moderation and cross-pressures are associated with partisan attachments across all parties. While these perceived elite behaviours can increase electoral performance by expanding constituencies or diversifying supporters' characteristics, they may influence partisanship and alter the likelihood of such attachments. As noted above, I operationalize ideological moderation as the dispersion of ideological placements weighted by electoral performance. It involves how respondents place each party on average and the distance between them. The lower this dispersion, the higher the moderation is perceived. Cross-pressure scores are the aggregated influence of respondents' demographics and ideological self-placement in the Canadian case. I run the MNL model that describes voting decisions and build the score based on its residuals. The distribution of ideological moderation (2019, $\bar{x} = 0.43$, s.e. = 0.002; 2021, $\bar{x} = 0.42$, s.e. = 0.002) and cross-pressure scores (2019, $\bar{x} = 0.69$, s.e. = 0.003; 2021, $\bar{x} = 0.72$, s.e. = 0.003) varies between the electoral years.

Using a multinomial logistic model (MNL) with the four categories of partisan attachments as the dependent variable, I report the predicted probabilities of each perceived strategy across models with their confidence intervals at a 95% confidence level.²⁵ For theoretical and estimation purposes, these models use ambivalent attachments as the baseline. Each year, predicted probabilities and confidence intervals of the likelihood of attachments are presented, with values ranging from low (0) to high (1) in perceived moderation and cross-pressures. When the estimates decline, a particular attachment is less likely across values of the perceived moderation and cross-pressures. Otherwise, the likelihood of such attachment increases when estimates increase.

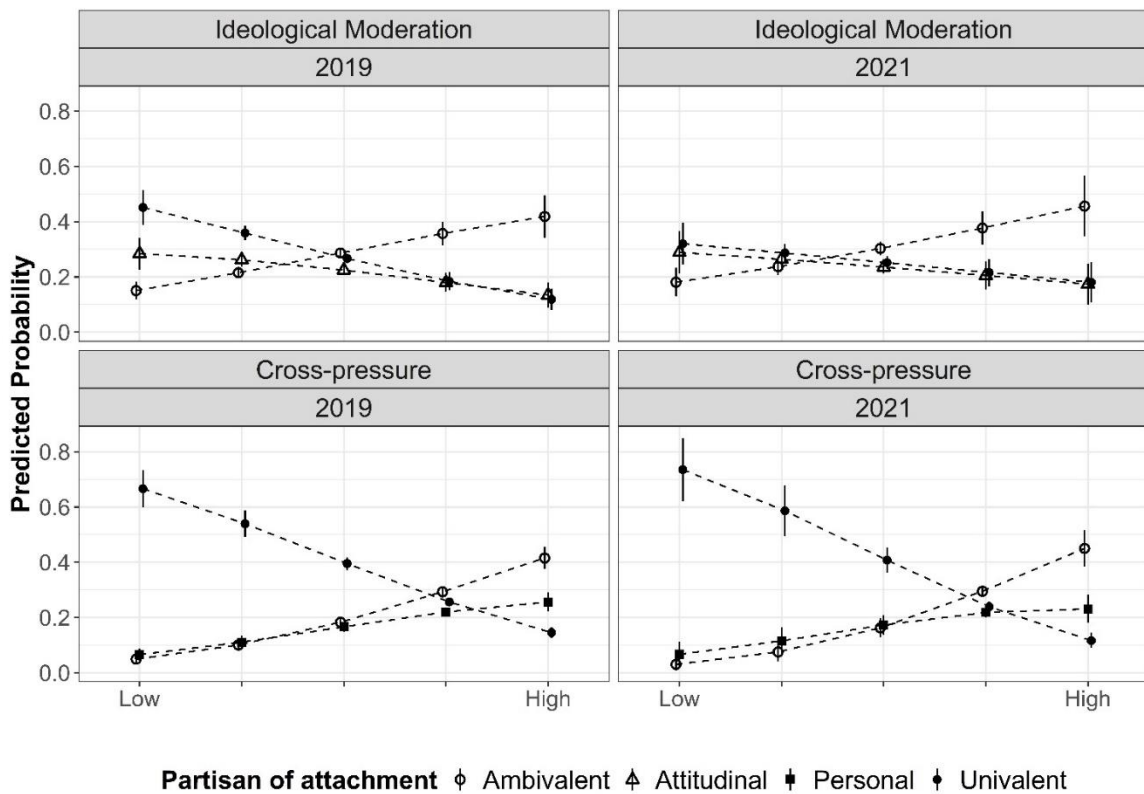
Figure 2.4 shows the predicted probabilities along with the levels of moderation and cross-pressures of each partisan attachment across all groups. To better represent the probabilities, I omitted personal attachments from the moderation panels and attitudinal attachments from the cross-pressure panel.²⁶ Beginning with moderation, hypothesis 2.1 predicts that ambivalent attachments in partisan groups will be more likely as perceived moderation rises. These findings confirm hypothesis 2.1. In the top-left panel (2019), the likelihood of ambivalent attachment significantly increases when more moderation is perceived ($\beta = 0.26$, CI 95% [0.15; 0.36], $p < 0.05$). In the top-right panel (2021), the probability of ambivalent attachment persistently increases with ideological moderation

²⁵ These models contain several demographics (e.g., gender, age, region, education), preferred party, and political interest. I rescaled the continuous variables to range from 0 to 1 to facilitate ease of interpretation.

²⁶ Both attitudinal attachment in the cross-pressure and personal attachment in the moderation panel were excluded to make the visualization easier. Along with perceptions of moderation, however, I have mixed findings with the likelihood of personal attachment. In 2019, as more moderation is perceived, the likelihood of personal attachment increases significantly ($p < 0.05$). However, in 2021, the likelihood decreases, but it does not reach statistical significance ($p = 0.70$). Along the cross-pressure scores, I consistently find that the likelihood of attitudinal attachments is not statistically significant. In 2019, attitudinal attachment is less likely along cross-pressure values ($p = 0.48$). In 2021, however, it more likely, but again not statistically significant ($p = 0.89$).

($\beta = 0.28$, CI 95% [0.12; 0.43], $p < 0.05$). By contrast, univalent and attitudinal attachments are less likely as moderation increases, and these effects on the likelihood of univalent ($\beta = -0.35$, CI 95% [-0.46;-0.25], $p < 0.05$) and attitudinal ($\beta = -0.17$, CI 95% [-0.28;-0.06], $p < 0.05$) attachments are statistically significant in 2019. In 2021, only the decline of univalent attachment likelihood is statistically significant ($\beta = -0.14$, CI 95% [-0.27;-0.01], $p < 0.05$).

Figure 2.4: Partisan Attachments by Moderation and Cross-pressure



Notes: Values represent each election year's perceived moderation and cross-pressures first differences, when significant. They describe the probability of each type of partisan attachment and the values of contextual variables. Confidence intervals are at 95%. None of the omitted attachments has statistical significance. The multinomial probit (MNL) models include party identification, gender, region, age, education, and political interest in both years.

Turning to cross-pressures, hypothesis 2.2 predicts that the likelihood of ambivalent attachment increases with the perception of cross-pressures across individual

sociodemographics. This is because cross-pressures unsort partisans, which provides the opposite incentive from social sorting and decreases partisans' sense of belonging (Mason & Wronski, 2018). Following Brader et al. (2014), I calculate cross-pressure scores in an MNL model that predicts voting decisions. In Figure 2.4 (bottom panels), the results confirm hypothesis 2.2. In the two election years, the likelihood of ambivalent attachments increases significantly across cross-pressures (2019, $\beta = 0.39$, CI 95% [0.34; 0.45]; $p < 0.05$; 2021, $\beta = 0.43$, CI 95% [0.34; 0.51]; $p < 0.05$). Cross-pressured partisans feel less sorted and have little sense of belonging to their party, so their attachment is more likely ambivalent. In contrast, personal attachments, which are expressive only, are more likely to occur under more cross-pressures (2019, beta equals 0.43, CI 95% [0.34; 0.51]; $p < 0.05$; 2021, beta equals 0.43, CI 95% [0.34; 0.51]; $p < 0.05$).²⁷ Perhaps univalent attachments, which become less likely across cross-pressures (2019, $\beta = -0.55$, CI 95% [-0.64; -0.46]; $p < 0.05$; 2021, $\beta = -0.63$, CI 95% [-0.78; -0.48]; $p < 0.05$), are replaced by personal or ambivalent attachments.

To summarize, moderation and cross-pressures are perceptions from elite strategies toward policy stances and social groups that can be linked with partisan attachments involving instrumental and expressive partisanship. Considering previous work on Canadian politics, perceptions about the party system are crucial to explaining partisan attachments. So, when considering expressive partisanship in Canada, these results demonstrate consistency in two election years by showing similar effects across values of

²⁷ Examining the models predicting each model of partisanship (instrumental and expressive partisanship measures), cross-pressures are statistically significant in both ($p < 0.05$). The negative effects of cross-pressures are more pronounced in instrumental partisanship than in expressive partisanship, suggesting that instrumental partisanship declines at a faster pace as the score increases.

moderation (H2.1) and cross-pressures (H2.2). The likelihood of ambivalent attachments rises when perceptions about the party indicate moderation—or less differentiation regarding ideological positions—and when perceptions about the party are cross-pressured—or indicate less differentiation regarding social sorting.

2.3.3. Conservative Strategies on Abortion and the Environment

After examining how different types of partisanship predict forms of engagement and the role of moderation and cross-pressures on each type, this section explores specifically the impact that party strategies can have on partisanship. Political parties in Canada can shift their policy stances to target a specific segment of voters in out-groups. This is an out-targeting strategy, a way to unsort partisan groups across policy stances or social groups. To test this idea, I focus on a concrete example of out-targeting. The Conservative Party of Canada shifted its policy stances between the last two elections to out-target voters with specific policy views. I expect that out-targeting will change the direction of how these policy attitudes moderate the likelihood of partisan attachments. Unlike the other two strategies (moderation and cross-pressures), out-targeting will be expressed through a conditional effect across policy views, enhancing the likelihood of ambivalent attachment among pro-life and anti-environmentalist voters. For this MNL model, I dichotomized Conservative identification between those who supported the Conservative Party and those who supported any other party.²⁸

Figure 2.5 illustrates the likelihood of partisan attachments in specific segments of the electorate that would be relevant to two policy attitudes on which the Conservative

²⁸ I consider an identifier anyone with party identification, regardless of its strength.

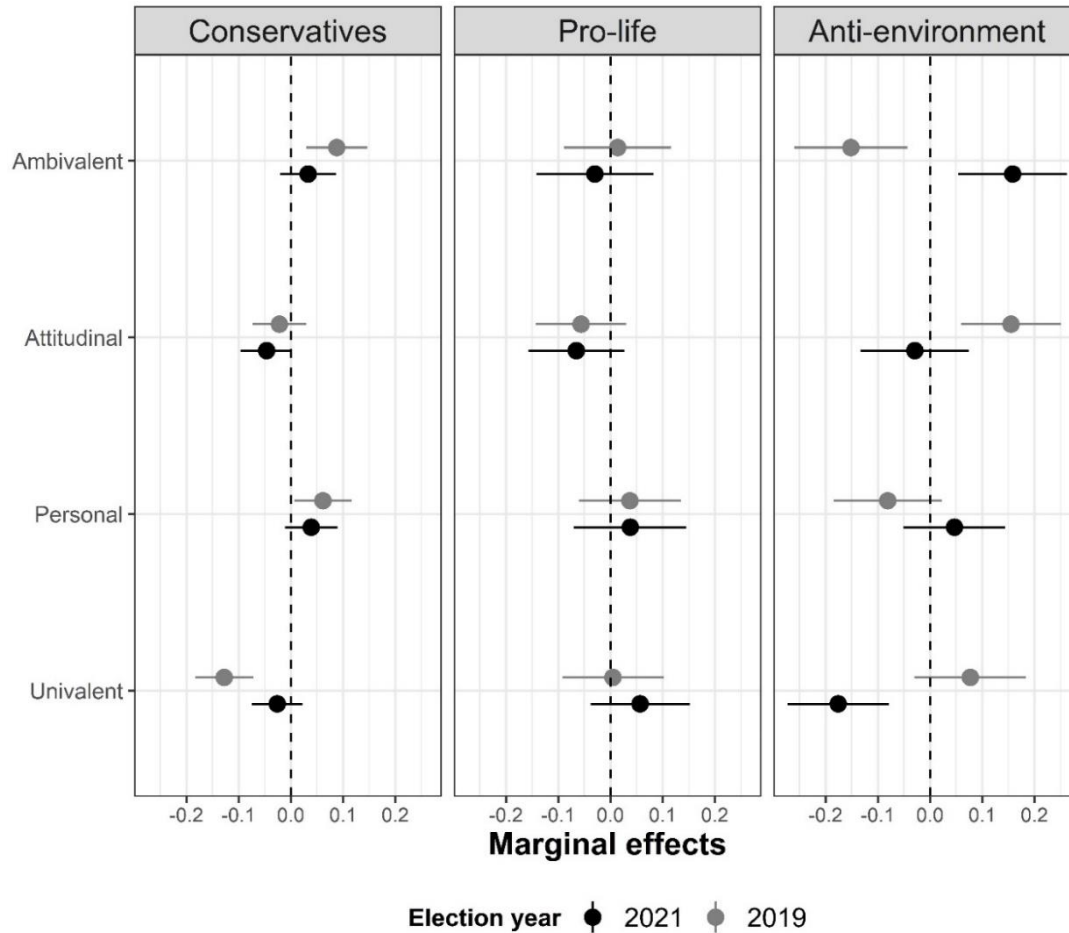
leaders or the party manifesto changed stances between 2019 and 2021.²⁹ To analyze whether Conservative supporters changed their attachments more than supporters in other partisan groups across policy stances due to out-targeting, I calculate the marginal effects with the second difference (i.e., difference of the differences) and confidence intervals at 95%. First, to classify partisans as pro-life or pro-choice, I rely on a question that asked whether abortion should be banned in Canada. Around 28% and 20% declared pro-life views in each election, respectively. Among these, 50% of pro-life partisans identify as Conservatives, the highest level across all partisan groups. Second, two questions determine whether voters have pro- or anti-environmentalist views. Respondents who select “no” in “Do you think that climate change is happening?” are classified as holding anti-environmentalist views. Respondents who believe in climate change but selected any option other than “Human activities such as burning fossil fuels for energy” in response to “What do you think is the main cause of climate change?” were also classified as holding anti-environmentalist views. These questions are used to divide voters between those with a higher chance of being against pro-environment policies (i.e., anti-environmentalist) and those with a higher chance of being pro-environment. Around 63% of anti-environmentalist voters identified as Conservative supporters in the two election years. Like the pro-life voters, this concentration suggests that this group is part of the Conservative Party coalition.

I report the rate of change in stances and party identification with the likelihood of each partisan attachment in the two election years. Party targeting predicts that the direction of this conditional effect of policy stances will likely lead to ambivalent attachments when

²⁹ This model includes the controls from the previous section, including perceived moderation and the cross-pressure score. I also rescale continuous variables to range from 0 to 1. In [Appendix 5](#), Table E1 displays the results for moderation and cross-pressure scores in interaction with Conservative identification.

the party strategy is to out-target (H2.3). Beginning with the first column of Figure 2.5, Conservative supporters are barely distinguished in the attachments they hold from other partisans. In 2019, Conservative support translated into a slightly higher likelihood of ambivalent and personal attachments and a lower likelihood of univalent attachments ($p < 0.05$). In 2021, except for attitudinal attachment ($p < 0.05$), there is no statistical difference across types of attachments. Likewise, attitudes on abortion (second column) do not moderate partisan attachments in both years. Pro-life views do not translate into a significantly different likelihood of any attachment relative to other partisans with opposite views on abortion.

Figure 2.5: Partisan Attachments and Conservative Party Out-targeting



Notes: The results show the marginal effect of being a Conservative supporter, pro-life Conservative supporter, and anti-environmentalist Conservative supporter in each election. In the first column, I calculate the difference between being Conservative or any other partisan supporter holding all other variables at their mean in an MNL model. Second, for the conditional effects of the two policy stances and having everything else at their mean values, I calculate a second difference between differences in partisan support and policy stances. The confidence intervals were calculated using the 95% confidence level.

However, comparing 2019 and 2021, these results suggest partial support for H2.3, which is related to environmental preferences. An anti-environment view moderates the likelihood of attachments among Conservative supporters relative to other partisans. In 2019, holding anti-environmentalist views and Conservative support translated into significantly more likely attitudinal ($\beta = 0.16$, CI 95% [0.06; 0.25]; $p < 0.05$) and less likely ambivalent attachment to the Conservative Party ($\beta = -0.15$, CI 95% [-0.26; -0.04];

$p < 0.05$). This year, the party leader, Andrew Scheer, aligned with partisan expectations and pledged to cut carbon taxes from Canadian taxpayers. Therefore, Conservative supporters were likely to demonstrate more instrumental-based components in their partisanship, such as issue agreement and positive leader evaluations, than ambivalent attachments. In the year that the party out-targeted anti-environmentalist voters, 2021, they are more likely to be ambivalent ($\beta = 0.16$, CI 95% [0.06; 0.26]; $p < 0.05$) and less likely univalent supporters of the Conservative Party ($\beta = -0.18$, CI 95% [-0.27; -0.08]; $p < 0.05$). While the decision to out-target during O'Toole's leadership increased the chance of ambivalent attachment, more importantly, it decreased the chance of Conservative supporters manifesting expressive- and instrumental-based components in their partisanship. Based on this result, it is expected that the Conservative partisan group across this policy stance was also less engaged and mobilized in the 2021 federal election year.

2.4. Limitations

Although the samples were large, and measured expressive partisanship through a valid multi-item expressive scale, this data structure cannot fully illustrate the dynamics of partisan attachment. A few questions persist. Rather than exploring processes by which partisans move from one attachment category to another, this chapter suggests heterogeneity of partisanship and, as a result, distinct levels of partisan-driven political engagement. The data consistently distinguish between the effects of ambivalent and univalent attachments across partisan-driven engagement variables and circumstances that enhance the likelihood of each attachment. However, the available data (two separate cross-sections of the population) do not support an empirical test (without relying on strong assumptions) of the dynamic framework, in which a change of political context results in a

change in levels between policy preferences and/or loyalty. This data structure also does not enable studies of whether attitudinal or personal attachments reflect a pathway between ambivalent and univalent attachments or vice versa. Panel data would reveal such dynamics within the four categories of partisan attachments.

Another limitation of this chapter is the case selection. Despite the Conservative Party concentrating on voters with pro-life and anti-environment views in previous elections, the mixed findings do not rule out the salience of these issues and policy reputation as mechanisms by which shifts in party appeals can shape partisan identity. In this chapter, the design suggests only that environmental policies relate to attachments without revealing whether it does so through the average importance of the issue or the prior connections with the Conservative Party. These differences represent instrumental and expressive factors that can shape the partisan group through policy domains. Experiments that manipulate policy- or group-based appeals with salient and perceived connections with a party may disentangle the strategic use of party targeting to enhance either instrumental or expressive factors within the party base.

2.5. Discussion and Conclusion

The ongoing debate about “running tally” or “unmoved movers” in both instrumental and expressive partisanship has suggested the prominence of expressive over the instrumental partisanship in recent years. However, analytical leverage is gained when combining these models through their measurement tools, which have recently been advanced in a series of studies (e.g., Bankert et al., 2017). Canada is an optimal case, as Clarke et al. (2019) state that partisans in the country are diverse in partisanship stability but have a “persistent

flexibility.” As in other contexts, scholars have pointed out the increasingly expressive components in the connection between partisans and parties, such as affective polarization, even though the expressive model of partisanship remains overlooked in the research in many countries. This current study addresses the challenge of considering expressive partisanship while taking into consideration the state of research in Canadian politics. My findings suggest that Canadian partisans are diverse in their attachments to parties whose behaviour can alter the chances of each attachment category. An excellent example was the shift in targets adopted by the Conservative Party between 2019 and 2021 related to the environment. Although the party had similar electoral performance in both elections, targeting out-groups resulted in partisans with more ambivalent attachments to the party. These results imply the role that a political party plays in engaging its partisanship despite using a strategy to boost electoral performance.

This chapter contributes to both studies of partisanship and Canadian political behaviour. First, by combining instrumental and expressive models into four attachment categories, this chapter suggests that dichotomizing partisanship models simplify the reality of voters’ attachments and make nuances between intersections of the models invisible. Huddy et al. (2015) and others have never ruled out the interplay between models, and this chapter demonstrates that it deserves to be considered. Using a representative sample of the Canadian population, univalent partisans report higher levels of affective polarization and wishful thinking than personally-attached partisans, who report lower levels of instrumental partisanship. Second, focusing on the heterogeneity frame, which describes the diversity in partisanship, this chapter considers the role political parties play in the nature of partisanship. The new categorization of attachments complexifies and provides a way of

assessing partisanship heterogeneity with measurement tools, such as the multi-item expressive scale. Therefore, it finally considered expressive partisanship in the Canadian context, where parties have fewer constraints to shift policy stances and adopt brokerage strategies.

This chapter improves our knowledge about partisan attachments and how elite behaviour shapes partisanship and boosts engagement. The next step should explore in more detail the dynamic framework of the interplay between instrumental and expressive models, how these attachments are formed and whether voters hold these attachments at different moments. The literature accepts that partisans develop a personal attachment through instrumental partisanship from socialization (Bankert, 2024). Still, there are instances in which people become personally attached to a party without necessarily connecting with policy stances or leadership performances—like immigrants attached to the Liberal Party in Canada (Blais, 2005). The pathways to becoming instrumental or expressive partisans are still a puzzle in political science. In addition, future research should be dedicated to understanding group-based appeals—i.e., messages toward social groups without policy content—in developing distinctions between attitudinal, personal and univalent attachments, in which most questions remain. Finally, future research should explore the Liberal Party centrism that generates a longstanding electoral advantage for the party in federal elections (Johnston, 2017). Recently, the party shifted its position on immigration, offering an opportunity to observe the effects of out-targeting in a different party brand in Canada.

The findings in this chapter imply that attachments can be essential assets for party campaigns and undesirable outcomes for the party system. Scholars have privileged

electoral outcomes and paid little attention to attachments as outcomes of elite strategies. The little attention paid to partisanship is likely due to the assumption that partisan identities are always durable, stemming from individual features and unlikely to be associated with elite behaviour in consecutive elections. Parties that shift strategies between elections, like the Conservative Party in 2019 and 2021, expect to produce electoral results but should also consider their impact on attachment and engagement. Therefore, considering instrumental and expressive factors allows experts to investigate longstanding support or party breakdowns in several contexts. Moreover, each partisanship connects with forms of engagement, and partisan attachments can predict levels of affective bias. Normatively, political parties should find an equilibrium that enhances engagement but does not increase animosity toward the out-group. Future research should also concentrate on the institutional features that incentivize elite strategies associated with attachments that return political mobilization with lower animosity.

3. Partisanship Under Class Influence: How Class Appeals Emphasize Partisan Identity in Great Britain

In recent decades, Great Britain has experienced a shift in the relationship between social class and political parties. Substantial evidence suggests a decline in class voting—namely, a disproportionate tendency of voters to support a party across the working-class cleavage (Evans, 2000). Since the evolution of post-industrial structures has blurred class divisions in British society, two accounts offer divergent explanations for this decline. Some studies propose that the working class has lost relevance following the convergence of policy offerings between the Labour and Conservative parties (e.g., Evans & Tilley, 2017), while others suggest that various categories, such as social class, remain as relevant as ever (Dalton, 2013; Thau, 2019). Focusing on class appeals, however, recent studies find a lasting influence of class on voters' attitudes and voting decisions (e.g., Thau, 2021; Robison et al., 2021; Stubager & Thau, 2025). Thus, could appeals toward the working class realign partisans to the British parties? Moreover, when are class appeals associated with a decline in partisanship among partisan voters?

Scholars have debated whether political parties should incorporate other appeals to expand their support bases, eventually leaving their class ties behind (Kitschelt, 1993; Green, 2011; Grant & Evans, 2024; Thau, 2024). Nevertheless, it is crucial to understand the relationship between class appeals and partisanship. Class appeals are group-based appeals that inform voters about the political affiliations of class membership to a party, thereby tailoring the social representation that benefits from the party's behaviour (Huber, 2022; Dolinsky, 2023). In Britain, as social class is traditionally divided between the two major parties, these class memberships have previous associations with each party, which

may condition the effects of class appeals on partisan bases (e.g., Hersh & Schaffner, 2013). Recent elections have demonstrated the use of class appeals in various contexts (Carnes & Lupu, 2021; Robison et al., 2021). This provides an opportunity to examine whether class appeals can intensify partisanship as a reliable factor in voters' considerations. Beyond the consensus that partisanship positively correlates with voting decisions, expressive partisanship can also indicate a more intense association between groups and parties, which has consequences for political involvement, information processing and stability in voting decisions (Huddy, Mason, & Aarøe, 2015).

In the political behaviour literature, previous studies have distinguished between two views of partisanship: a) instrumental partisanship, a running tally of policy offerings, issue priorities, and leader performances (e.g., Kollman & Jackson, 2021), and b) expressive partisanship, an identity-based attachment based on people's memberships in social groups (e.g., Huddy et al., 2015). Each view of partisanship represents a distinct theoretical foundation; unlike the instrumental variant, expressive partisanship reflects a subjective sense of inclusivity in a partisan group and a desire for differentiation from other groups (e.g., Greene, 2004).³⁰

Scholars suggest that the dissociation between class and parties directly impacts partisanship (Adams, Green, & Milazzo, 2012; Evans & Tilley, 2012), leading to short-term factors, such as leader performances, becoming stronger predictors of voting decisions

³⁰ Expressive partisanship and identity-based party identification have often been interchangeable. However, this study separates party preference from expressive partisanship. Huddy, Davies and Sandor (2020) say: "For direction, this means focusing on the affective and identity components of partisanship and stressing its long-term nature. For strength, this translates into the use of a multi-item identity scale (Bankert, Huddy and Rosema 2017; Huddy, Mason and Aarøe, 2015), which is grounded in social identity theory and is a better predictor of political outcomes than more traditional measures of partisan strength (Bankert, Huddy and Rosema 2017)." Therefore, because the measure of expressive partisanship using the multi-item battery reflects the sense of identity, this study refers to the intensity component as expressive partisanship.

(Garzia, 2013; Evans & Neundorf, 2020). However, evidence indicates the consistent influence of partisanship among British voters that extends to voting decisions; for instance, partisan-motivated reasoning on economic issues (Bisgaard, 2015) and affective polarization between Labour and Conservative supporters (e.g., Huddy et al., 2018). As the effects of partisanship have been contested in studies among British voters given mixed evidence, and scholars have argued that Brexit identities realigned voters across new partisan attachments (Fieldhouse, et al., 2023), this is an excellent case for assessing whether the levels of partisanship remain associated with perceptions of working-class appeals in a party's campaign strategies.

Existing associations between class membership and parties condition class appeals. While partisanship models interpret the effects of class-party dealignment through a conflict between class membership and party preferences (e.g., Grant & Evans, 2024), others interpret these effects through a convergence between out-groups and parties in their policy offerings (Evans & Tilley, 2012; Gunderson, 2024). I argue that levels of partisanship are associated with perceptions of class appeals. In-targeting, or appeals to traditional class ties, should increase the sense of inclusivity, further distinguishing the party from opposition parties. Since well-established connections result from long-standing associations, partisan supporters may perceive a closer alignment between traditional allies and the party brand, giving rise to expressive partisanship. Within the British case, this leads to the expectation that partisanship should be stronger among Labour supporters who perceive appeals to working-class voters as more effective. However, Labour partisanship is expected to decline in strength when: i) there is a perception of appeals to the working class from the Conservative Party; ii) there is a conflict between middle-class membership

and Labour preferences in class appeals; or iii) when voters perceive indistinctive class appeals from both major parties.

To test the above expectations, I rely upon multi-wave panel data from 2021 to 2024 in the British Election Study (Fieldhouse, et al., 2024). This period covers the shifts in Labour and Conservative strategies following the 2019 General Election, namely the “Brexit election.” These panel surveys have also consistently gathered perceptions of class appeals, party preferences, and a multi-item scale on expressive partisanship (e.g., Bankert et al., 2017). To preview the results, perceived in-targeting of the working class consistently intensifies partisanship among Labour partisan voters. When supporters perceive that Labour is emphasizing workers, they also report stronger expressive partisanship than supporters of the Conservative Party do when the latter is perceived as appealing to the working class. The findings weakly suggest that middle-class members weaken Labour partisanship when the party making the appeals contradicts the party's class ties with the working-class. Finally, perceptions of indistinct appeals further decrease partisanship among those who perceive convergence between the Labour and Conservative class appeals.

Ultimately, this chapter contributes to our understanding in three key areas. First, scholars indicate that knowledge about group memberships is central to deepening commitment to a party (e.g., Kane et al., 2021). If so, appeals can intensify partisanship regardless of who receives it from their preferred party. This chapter suggests that among partisans, reactions to class appeals are conditioned on whether the party's appeal targets class ties already present in the party brand (e.g., Lupu, 2016; Gunderson, 2024). Second, group-based appeals rely on group membership to play a decisive role in polarization and

voting decisions (Thau, 2021; Huber et al., 2024). The results suggest conflicts with group membership or convergence in appeals weaken partisan ties. In these circumstances, while it may generate benefits for performance in each election, broadening or converging appeals may result in dealignment with the major parties. Third, there is an ongoing debate about whether the Labour Party should broaden its appeals to other groups beyond their working-class ties (see Grant & Evans, 2023; Thau, 2024). Since class appeals intensify partisanship, which predicts political actions and voting stability, connecting with the working class remains beneficial for the party in the long run. Thus, this chapter concludes that class appeals remain a wise strategy as they strengthen ties with political parties.

3.1. Theoretical Framework

3.1.1. Partisan alignment, working-class, and group-based appeals

Partisanship is often seen as a reliable predictor of voting decisions and an indicator of the stability of associations between groups (e.g., religious, linguistic, class, racial minorities, and so forth) and political parties (Green, Palmquist, & Schickler, 2002). In contemporary models, party strategies involving policy offerings are central to shaping these associations. Shifts in policy offerings, ideological positions and emphasis on specific issues determine how closely a party is perceived to align with a group (Kollman & Jackson, 2021; Dassonneville et al., 2023). When parties distance themselves from their supporters or align more closely with the opposition, it impacts both group affiliations and party preferences. Although these shifts might not directly impact immediate voting decisions, parties that fail to address the needs and expectations of their core supporters typically experience a decline in partisan loyalty before any impact on voting decisions (Lupu, 2016).

In the previous model, partisanship is the primary mechanism between parties and a few behavioural outcomes. The convergence of policy offerings (e.g., on redistribution) between the Labour and Conservative parties has led to a long-term decline in class-party associations in Britain (Green & Hobolt, 2008). Evans and Tilley (2012) state that this convergence has weakened partisanship, particularly as New Labour has shifted from the left to the centre of the ideological spectrum. With working-class alienation and a decline in partisanship, voting now hinges on short-term factors, such as the performance of leaders (Garzia, 2013). British parties have adjusted their strategies to prevent significant electoral losses by adopting new policies and broadening their appeals to various groups (e.g., Abou-Chadi & Wagner, 2019). Policy convergence and new cleavages are predicted to lead to weaker partisanship and lower voting stability, two historical trends in British electoral politics. Recently, for instance, rather than polarizing voters along traditional party lines, political parties have started collecting voters sorted by opinion-based identities related to Brexit (Hobolt et al., 2021). Brexit identities might be part of an ongoing realignment process, further shifting electoral cleavages and stability in voting decisions and intensifying partisan identities in the short term (Fieldhouse et al., 2023).

Despite evidence indicating that voters adjust their views on policy cues and skepticism surrounding issue-based voting (e.g., Achen & Bartels, 2016), parties can still formulate strategies to mobilize groups without compromising on policies, utilizing what is known as group cues (Valentino, Traugott, & Hutchings, 2002; Brader, Valentino, & Suhay, 2008). Two instances of group cues are extensively discussed in the existing literature. First, the candidate's background, or affinity-based voting, can serve as a group cue for voters who seek alignment with individuals sharing their identities (Campbell,

Green, & Layman, 2011; Heath, 2015). Second, group-based appeals involve tailored messages, which increase perceptions of alignment between parties and groups (Hersh & Schaffner, 2013; Huber, 2022; Stubager & Thau, 2025). These appeals emphasize ties, often including statements about the kind of people who benefit from and support a particular party. Since they do not rely on knowledge of specific policy offerings, group-based appeals can be effectively incorporated into electoral materials, thus making group memberships a prominent factor in preferences for a party and voting decisions (Klar, 2013).

Group-based appeals may impact group membership, voting decisions, and partisanship. Such appeals highlight the social divisions related to voters' preferences, thus altering attitudes and influencing the vote-making process (Thau, 2021; Stubager & Thau, 2025). Regarding electoral outcomes, however, the advantages for candidates employing group-based appeals are often unclear (Druckman, 2022, p. 73). On the one hand, Hersh and Schaffner (2013) suggest that group-based appeals fail to bolster candidate support and could even have negative repercussions among broader audiences. On the other hand, Robison et al. (2021) show that appeals can effectively persuade workers to support a party while exacerbating evaluations along class divisions. Finally, group-based appeals can enhance awareness of a party's social composition, further prompting supporters to adjust the significance of their political identity within the coalition (Greene, 2004; Mason & Wronski, 2018; Kane et al., 2021). Consequently, group-based appeals can increase loyalty, influence information processing, and involve voters in political campaigns (Huddy et al., 2015).

The transformation of class-party associations has long puzzled scholars of British politics. It has resulted in long-standing dealignment with the major political parties and

instability in voting decisions by increasing the vote rate for minor political parties. While there is an ongoing debate about whether the major parties should broaden their appeals beyond the working-class toward to the middle-class or blend policy appeals to target other groups (Thau, 2024; Grant & Evans, 2024), other scholars point out that similar strategies might decrease partisan ties and voting stability (Lupu, 2016; Dassonneville, 2023). But despite the consistent decline in class-party associations in the face of new identities (e.g., Brexit identity) and the increasing influence of short-term factors in voting decisions, class appeals continue to impact politics through class membership (e.g., Thau, 2021; Robison et al., 2021). The correlation between class appeals and partisanship needs to be clarified as it trends with dealignment and instability in British politics. Based on previous models, I propose that class, specifically the working-class, is still distinctly represented within the British party system, shaping Labour and Conservative partisanship. Therefore, partisanship might vary in intensity depending on the messages framing these class ties in electoral materials.

3.1.2. Class-party associations: in-targeting, cross-pressure and brands

Group-based appeals inform voters about affiliations and render party brands, which refer to social representation of who benefits from the party's behaviour (Lupu, 2016). Two perspectives exist on how these group-based appeals influence voters' support (Hersh & Schaffner, 2013; Stubager & Thau, 2025). The informational approach suggests that group-based appeals inform voters by signalling connections between groups and parties. In this view, the appeal increases attention to alliances and garners support through shared affinities (Huber, Meyer, & Wagner, 2024). Conversely, the strategic approach limits the informational value of group-based appeals, emphasizing party brands or the alliances

within a party's support base among voters (e.g., Iyengar & Valentino, 2000; Stuckelberger & Tresch, 2024). Since targeting implies reputation and the elite's pandering to specific groups, it may encounter less resistance than targeting other cleavages (Hersh & Schaffner, 2013). Therefore, the effectiveness of group-based appeals also relies on highlighting prior connections in party messages. With targeting, appeals can be categorized based on the existing relationship between the group and the party. In-targeting refers to appeals made to groups with established connections to a party, while out-targeting involves appealing to groups beyond existing associations, aiming to broaden alliances. Exposure to in-targeting may influence partisanship as voters perceive inclusivity and differentiation from other parties.

The most personal attachment to a party is known as expressive partisanship (Huddy et al., 2015). It is a critical political identity that shapes individuals' views on their group and those outside the party (e.g., Huddy, 2013). This identity-based partisanship highlights a deep attachment, leading to heightened political engagement, emotionally charged information processing, motivated reasoning and consistent voting behaviour (e.g., Huddy et al., 2018). Furthermore, expressive partisanship is closely tied to group dynamics and group-party associations (e.g., Mason & Wronski, 2018). When supporters feel a sense of belonging with others who share their affiliation, their partisanship becomes prominent in vote-making (Campbell et al., 2011). When distributed evenly across parties, expressive partisanship contributes to a clear party brand that distinguishes one social coalition from another (Mason, 2018). This party brand is crucial for expressive partisanship, as it psychologically distinguishes those who support a particular party. The closer a party aligns

with its perceived social alliances, the greater the expressive partisanship among its supporters.

In Great Britain, class voting declined alongside a reshaping of party brands and group alliances within the Labour and Conservative parties (e.g., Thau, 2019). Scholars focusing on voting behaviour have developed two main explanations for how party strategies influence partisanship. The perceived alignment between party brands and group identities has a strong influence on partisanship and voting choices. Conversely, when party messages emphasize the mismatch between their perceived alliances and the groups they represent, it creates tension between supporters, thus reducing the potential partisanship and voting consistency among such a cross-pressured electorate (Dassonneville, 2023). There is an ongoing debate among scholars and practitioners about whether appeals to class or symbolic groups ultimately benefit or harm British parties, particularly New Labour. In the long term, however, any strategy must account for partisanship as a factor that provides loyalty and constraints for vote-making processes. For instance, Grant and Evans (2024) argue that Labour's appeals to ethnic minorities could potentially backfire among the working class because of the perception that the party is closer to another group, ethnic minorities. During the period of Brexit salience and the 2019 general election, the concept of cross-pressured voters has been used to explain electoral results, volatility in Labour voting, and dealignment with the party (Fieldhouse et al., 2023). In this case, cross-pressured voters may feel less connected with the traditional party, which might impact their partisanship with the Labour Party.

The prevailing explanation for the decline in class-party associations emphasizes the long-standing trend of convergence in policy offerings between the Labour and

Conservative parties, particularly regarding redistribution and the working class (Evans & Tilley, 2017). While brand clarity refers to voters' clear perception that their chosen party offers policy and representation that aligns with their interests, a convergence between group-based appeals weakens the association between voters and parties (i.e., brand dilution), reducing the likelihood of developing such strong attachments. Lupu (2016) finds that brand dilution affects party identity before the declining electoral performance, leaving parties vulnerable to adverse events and ineffective governance (see also Gunderson, 2024). In the British case, the ambiguity surrounding which class each major party represents contributed to the decline in class voting and reduced the alignment between class and party in the electorate (Evans & Tilley, 2012; Thau, 2019; Fieldhouse et al., 2023). Scholars have explored the distribution of class division in the traditional measurement of party identification, finding that both Labour and Conservative parties have similar class proportions in their partisan groups (Evans & Tilley, 2012). Such brand dilution indicates that when there is no difference between parties in their appeals to groups, partisanship might decline in strength rather than remain steady.

The lack of class influence on Labour and Conservative partisanship, replaced by new identities, provides an opportunity for a significant test of the lasting effectiveness of class appeals in intensifying partisanship. Despite the diminishing association between class and party, reaching its peak in the 2019 general election with working-class voters voting for the Conservatives, scholars have demonstrated that class appeals continue to influence working-class voters' attitudes and voting for the Labour Party. Through a combination of experimental and observational studies, Thau (2021) reveals that the impact of class on voters' considerations varies depending on the extent to which each party

emphasizes class ties. Moreover, employing open-ended questions, Stubager and Thau (2025) examine reactions to class appeals and highlight the presence of emotionally charged language in response to these party messages. These findings suggest that, beyond shaping policy considerations and voting decisions, class appeals evoke a deeply emotional form of support. Thus, while the strategic model of group appeals imposes limitations on the informational value of party cues, it implies that such appeals engender expressive partisanship among voters. Considering this type of attachment, partisans would not abandon their party preferences or switch their allegiance entirely. However, internalized party identification will indeed be influenced by the targets of class appeals, which can have multiple consequences for voting decisions, reasoning, and political involvement.

Based on the literature and reasoning cited above, this chapter empirically explores the relationship between class appeals, party preference, and expressive partisanship among partisan supporters. In the traditional party preference question,³¹ I focus on partisan supporters who prefer the Labour or Conservative parties. These major parties have historically been divided along the lines of the working and middle classes. In British politics, in-targeting refers to a party appealing to their traditional class division. For instance, when the Labour Party appeals to workers, it is in-targeting. I expect that Labour supporters who perceive in-targeting from the Labour Party will report more expressive partisanship than those who perceive explicit appeals from the Conservative Party to workers. Conversely, Conservative supporters who perceive appeals to middle-class people from the Conservative Party will report more expressive partisanship than those who

³¹ This measure reads: “*Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat or what?*” This question refers to the direction of the preference. In addition, in case of a missing response in the traditional question, I use the measure that reads: “*Do you generally think of yourself as a little closer to one of the parties than the others? If yes, which party?*”

perceive more appeals from the Labour Party to the middle class. Thus, the in-targeting hypothesis states the following:

Hypothesis 3.1: In-targeting hypothesis: Supporters who perceive their party appealing to their class group will report more expressive partisanship than those who perceive explicit appeals from the competitor party.

Hypothesis 3.1a: Labour partisans who perceive their party appealing to their working-class group will report more expressive partisanship than those who perceive explicit working-class appeals from the Conservative party.

Hypothesis 3.1b: Conservative partisans who perceive their party appealing to their middle-class group will report more expressive partisanship than those who perceive explicit middle-class appeals from the Labour party.

Cross-pressure refers to a conflict between group membership and the direction of party preference (e.g., Dassonneville, 2023; Grant & Evans, 2024), such as when a group member perceives a conflict between their membership and the brand associated with their party preference. For example, Conservative supporters who identify with a working-class background and perceive appeals from the Labour Party to workers will report less expressive partisanship for the Conservative Party than those who perceive appeals from the Conservative Party to be directed at them. In contrast, Labour supporters who hold a middle-class membership and perceive more appeals from the Conservative Party to their class will report less expressive partisanship for the Labour Party than those who perceive explicit appeals from the Labour Party to the middle class. Assuming that class and party identification constitute group memberships, the cross-pressure hypothesis states that:

Hypothesis 3.2: Cross-pressure hypothesis: Supporters with a distinct class membership from a traditional coalition will report less expressive partisanship when they notice appeals from the other party to their class group, compared with their own party's appeal to their class group.

Finally, brand dilution reflects the convergence between the class appeals of the Labour and Conservative parties. Labour supporters who perceive convergence between appeals to workers from both parties will report less expressive partisanship than those who perceive distinct appeals. In opposition, Conservative supporters who perceive convergence in appeals to the middle class from the Labour and Conservative parties will report less expressive partisanship than those who perceive distinct class appeals. The last hypothesis in the chapter—namely, the brand dilution hypothesis—states the following:

Hypothesis 3.3: Brand dilution hypothesis: Supporters who perceive convergence in appeals to the party's class ties will report less expressive partisanship than those who perceive differentiation in class appeals.

3.2. Data and Measurement

To test these hypotheses, this chapter relies on five waves (21, 23, 25, 27, and 29) of the British Election Studies (BES) panel data. These waves cover the period between 2021 and 2024 after Corbyn's and Johnston's leadership in both major parties. This period also encompasses the aftermath of the 2019 general election, in which the Conservatives achieved a landslide victory. Brexit was the most critical issue and defined the electoral results. Since then, opinion-based identity around Brexit (between leavers and remainers) appears more salient than traditional partisan identity (e.g., Hobolt et al., 2021), and

Conservative support has appeared to decline. Meanwhile, the class-party cleavage remains dissociated in the electorate (Fieldhouse et al., 2023), further representing a long-standing trend in British politics and a critical test for class influence on partisan support. In the 2024 election, despite the Labour Party's landslide victory and the Conservative Party's massive defeat, scholars continue to point to Brexit divisions as the most significant factor in the electoral and expressive outcomes (Prosser, 2025). Across BES waves, about 81% of the sample reports a party preference in the party identification question, but the support for each party changed over time.³² For example, approximately 39% of the sample preferred the Conservative Party in the first wave. In the last wave, 29% remained attached to the party. By comparison, 24% preferred the Labour Party in the first wave and ended up with 25%. This suggests that more voters aligned with Labour by the end of this period.

In addition to party identification, the expressive scale measures the strength of an individual's partisan identity (Huddy et al., 2018). About 6,760 respondents who indicated any party preference completed the battery at least once across the five waves. Table 3.1 presents the six items used to measure expressive partisanship. At the bottom, Cronbach's alpha indicates good internal consistency for the partisanship battery, comprising six items. Each item has four responses, ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (4). Therefore, this provides a more sensitive measurement for the intensity of partisanship than the traditional partisanship strength scale, predicting multiple expressive outcomes. I combine these items and rescale their points to vary between low (0) and high (1) expressive partisanship.

³² See details in [Appendix 6](#), Table F2.

Previous studies have utilized manifestos to capture group-based appeals (e.g., Thau, 2019; Dolinsky, 2023). In experimental settings, however, scholars have opted to manipulate these appeals within party messages (e.g., Hersh & Schaffner, 2013; Robison et al., 2021; Thau, 2021). In the BES, perceptions of group appeals were consistently asked, and information about group ties in party brands was directly provided (Evans & Tilley, 2017; Grant & Evans, 2023).³³ This question reads: “*Some people say that all political parties look after certain groups and are not so concerned about others. How closely do you think the [party] looks after the interests of...*”. I focus on two groups across the three waves: the working and middle classes. Each party has four response points, ranging from “not at all closely” (1) to “very closely” (4).

Table 3.1: Six-item Expressive Partisanship Battery

Item	Question-wording
#1	When I speak about this party, I usually say “we” instead of “they”.
#2	I am interested in what other people think about this party.
#3	When people criticize this party, it feels like a personal insult.
#4	I have a lot in common with other supporters of this party.
#5	When I meet someone who supports this party, I feel connected with this person.
#6	When I speak about this party, I refer to them as “my party.”
\bar{x} (SE)	.46 (.001)
$\alpha_{wave\ 21}$.88
$\alpha_{wave\ 23}$.89
$\alpha_{wave\ 25}$.89
$\alpha_{wave\ 27}$.88
$\alpha_{wave\ 29}$.87

Notes: All items were combined to generate a scale that ranges from low (0) to high (1).

This empirical chapter uses these perceived class appeals to evaluate the in-targeting (H3.1), cross-pressure (H3.2), and brand dilution (H3.3) hypotheses outlined above. First,

³³ See details in [Appendix 7](#) about whether this measurement presents partisan bias in its responses.

in-targeting refers to the difference between the perceived class appeal of the party most closely associated with a particular class and the perceived appeal of the party least associated with it. For instance, in targeting workers, the difference is between perceived Labour appeals and Conservative appeals. This results in positive numbers representing in-targeting and negative numbers representing out-targeting. Thus, an emphasis on workers and more positive values indicates distinctive appeals being perceived from the Labour Party. Second, this chapter also uses the perceived appeals to measure cross-pressure in the model, interacting with class membership and party preference direction. Although the cross-pressure hypothesis highlights the conflict that leads to cross-pressure, the analysis presents the total interaction between class membership and party preference, as reflected in the content of group-based appeals (e.g., Conservative workers noticing a clear appeal from Labour to the working class). Third, for brand dilution, this chapter uses the situation where both parties are rated the same for a single class division as an indicator of convergence in class appeals. The dilution variable is rescaled (i.e., folded) so that 1 means there is more convergence in class appeals.

In the following section, I present descriptive results for expressive partisanship and class appeals. Given their previous applications, it begins assessing measurement invariance in the partisanship battery and the correlational relationship between class appeals and voting. These first investigations aim to enhance our confidence in the robustness of the subsequent hypothesis testing. Next, I test the in-targeting hypothesis using a random effects (RE) model, which includes time-invariant variables and interactions between party preferences and class appeals. In addition, I run a cross-lagged model to examine whether there is a reverse causation between partisanship and in-

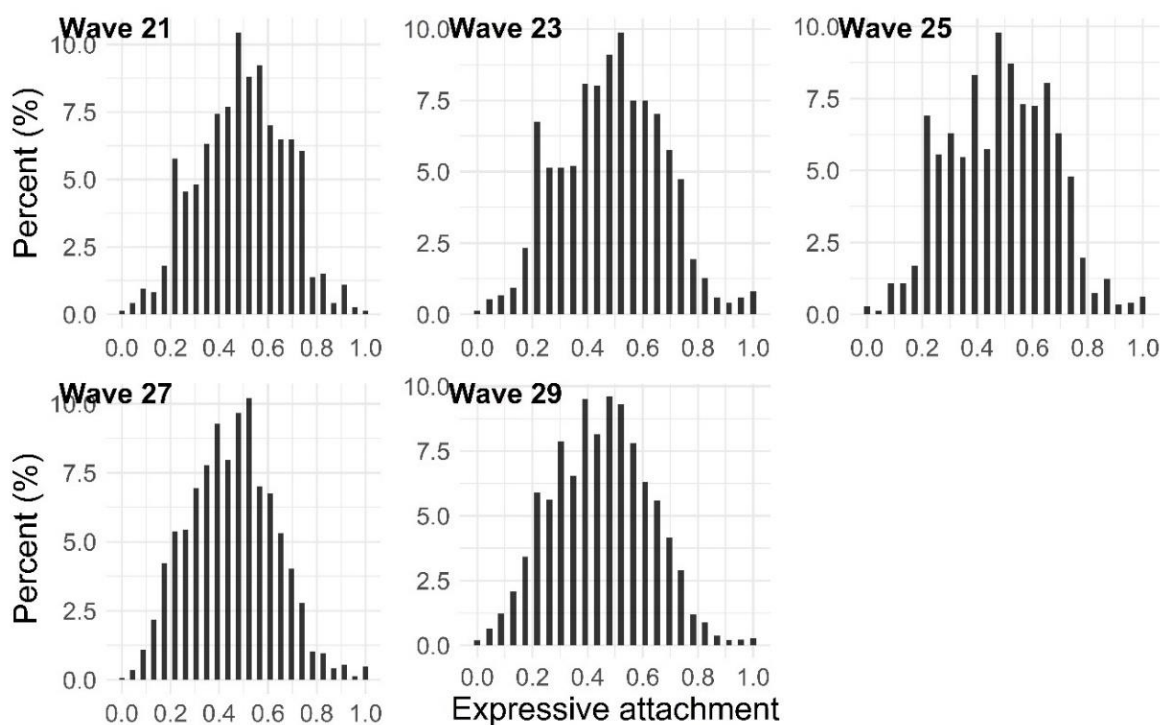
targeting appeals. The RE model examines a three-way interaction among party preferences, class appeals, and class membership for the cross-pressure hypothesis. Finally, I assess the brand dilution hypothesis by rerunning the RE model with the convergence variable in the interaction with party preferences. I expect that while in-targeting intensifies expressive partisanship among the party's supporters, cross-pressure and brand dilution are expected to decrease the strength of partisanship.

3.3. Results

3.3.1. Distribution of expressive partisanship and class appeals

These analyses begin by looking at the general characteristics of expressive partisanship. Figure 3.1 displays the distribution of this partisanship in each wave. As in previous studies (e.g., Huddy et al., 2018), the first concern is about the stability of expressive partisanship across waves and among partisan groups. Expressive partisanship demonstrates stability in this sample with an average of 0.46 (SE = 0.002) in each wave. Labour supporters report a higher level of expressive partisanship than Conservative supporters, varying between 0.48 and 0.53 (SE = 0.003), compared to 0.43 and 0.47 (SE = 0.003).

Figure 3.1: Distribution of Expressive Partisanship by Wave



Notes: Expressive partisanship refers to the 6-point measure of partisan identity strength (Huddy et al., 2015). This measurement was rescaled to range from 0 to 1.

I run a structural model that includes the six latent expressive partisanship items to assess the stability of expressive partisanship across waves and between the two parties. Due to the panel structure, errors are correlated across items to account for their similarities over time (see [Appendix 8](#), Table H1). This model suggests a good fit and invariance across waves (RMSEA = 0.080; CFI = 0.904). Standardized parameters indicate moderate movement in partisanship between subsequent waves (waves 21 and 23 = .68, SE = .016; waves 23 and 25 = .50, SE = .030; waves 25 and 27 = .45, SE = .015; waves 27 and 29 = .520, SE = .015). As 1 means no movement across waves, these results suggest specific shifts in the levels of expressive partisanship. In contrast to the findings of Huddy et al. (2018), I find partisanship is less stable among Conservative supporters. These results

generally highlight changes in partisanship, with some stability over time, between waves, and across groups, suggesting a party-level factor associated with expressive partisanship levels. Given these data follow solid ideological leadership from Corbyn in the Labour Party and chaos within the Conservative leadership, the distinct results in expressive partisan stability between the major parties make sense.

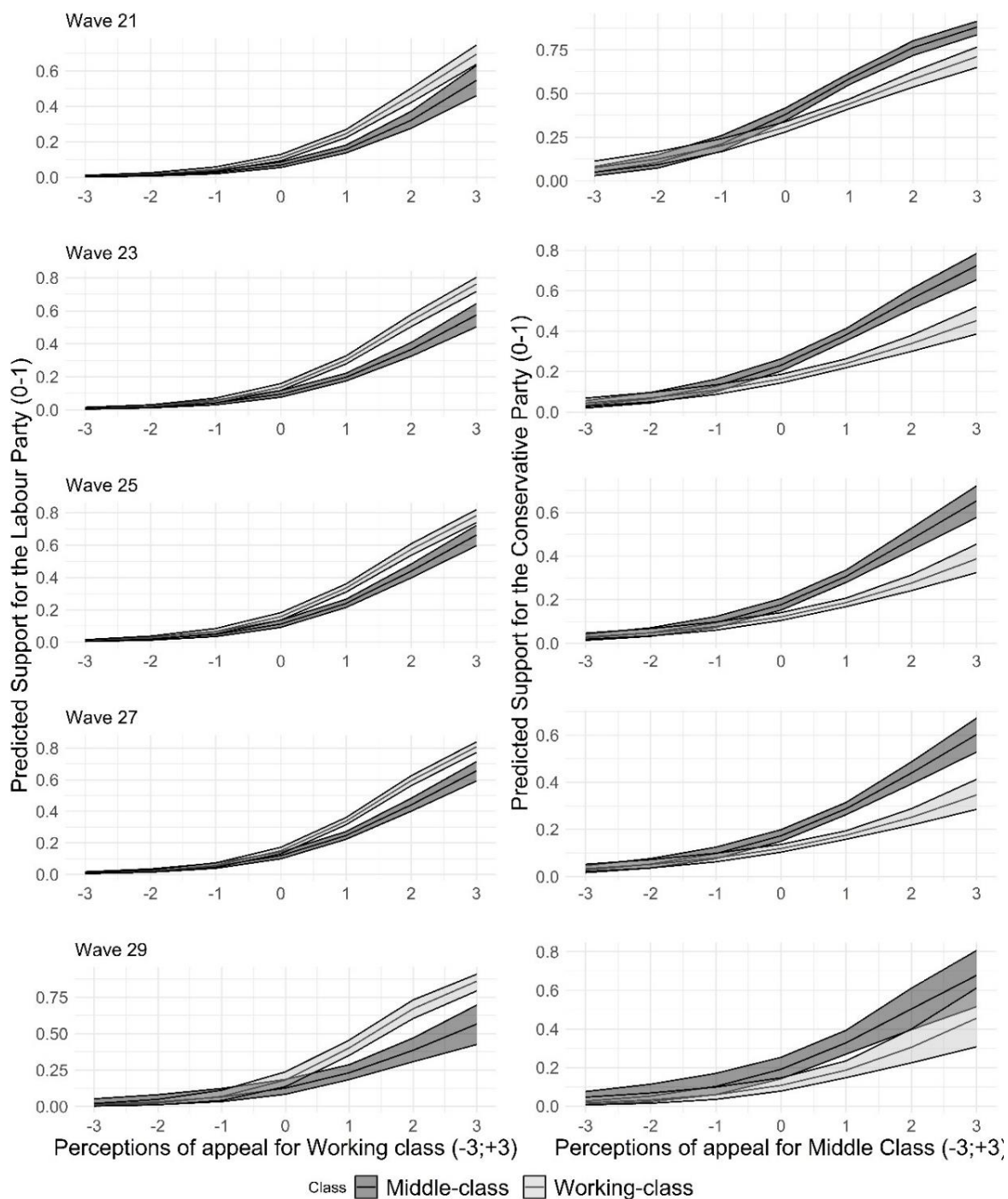
A second concern is about perceptions of class appeals. Most respondents indicate the Labour Party as ‘very closely’ to workers.³⁴ At the same time, respondents also acknowledge that the Conservative Party appears to prioritize the middle class over the working class. About 32% report that Labour appeals very closely to workers’ interests, compared to less than 7% who report that the Conservative Party appeals very closely to the working class. In the ‘fairly closely’ response category, supporters largely disagreed. The majority perceives its party as closer to the other party’s class division. While 53% of Conservative supporters perceive their party as appealing to workers, 66% of Labour supporters indicate it is somewhat closer to the middle class. To investigate these appeals more closely, I analyze the correlation structure between perceptions of appeals and class voting. Figure 3.2 illustrates the predicted support for each party by class membership. As suggested in previous studies, class appeals are related to disproportionate support for each party among middle- and working-class members (e.g., Thau, 2021; Robison et al., 2021). As the perceptions of appeals from the Labour Party to workers increase, workers report more intentions to vote for Labour than middle-class voters ($p < .05$). Respondents who are

³⁴ The scale for this measure ranges from “Not at all closely” to “Very closely.” In the middle of this scale, respondents can report “not very closely” or “fairly closely.” See more details in [Appendix 7](#), Tables G1-5.

members of the middle class, in column 2 of Figure 2, intend to vote significantly more for the Conservative Party when they perceive more appeals from the party ($p < .05$).

So far, this empirical examination of the BES data has increased our confidence in the 6-item expressive scale and the perceptions of class appeals, as the results align with the expectations in the existing literature cited above. Although the expressive scale demonstrates high stability, variation occurs across waves and between supporters. As expected, class appeals correlate with disproportional support from class members to political parties, as the difference between class divisions grows when respondents perceive the Labour Party as appealing to the working class and the Conservative Party as appealing to the middle class.

Figure 3.2: The impact of perceived class appeals on class voting



Notes: These predicted probabilities represent the interaction between subjective class and perceptions of class appeal (directional format) on the vote for Labour (column 1) or the Conservative party (column 2) versus any other party using a logistic model. All models control for age, country (e.g., England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland), gender, and ideological beliefs.

3.3.2. Partisanship under the in-targeting influence

To test the expectations for the association between class appeals and partisanship, I employ random-effects models (RE) on expressive partisanship.³⁵ The dependent variable is the expressive scale, which ranges from 0 to 1. Except for class appeals, which vary from -1 to +1, all other independent variables also were rescaled to vary between 0 and 1. Table 3.2 presents the results in four different RE models (see complete table in [Appendix 9](#)). As the literature expects that the effect of group appeals works through group membership and party preference, Table 3.2 emphasizes the interaction terms. Model 1, without any control, estimates in-targeting for the middle and working classes, with closer to +1 indicating a more explicit appeal to the party's class ties. In contrast, the closer to -1, the more explicit the appeal to the opposition's class ties. Model 2 adds controls for ideological positions and demographics to the previous model. This model tests for the in-targeting hypothesis (H3.1). Model 3 estimates the three-way interaction among perceptions of class appeals, party preference and class membership, testing the cross-pressure hypothesis (H3.2). Finally, Model 4 includes the appeal convergence variable interacting with party preference, which examines the brand dilution hypothesis (H3.3). In all four models, the Conservative Party is the reference category. Thus, negative coefficients suggest that Conservative supporters report less expressive partisanship than Labour supporters.

³⁵ When selecting the RE model, I consider the number of units and observations per unit. Furthermore, I prefer the compromise between the FE and the pooling model that the RE model represents, with a less drastic reduction in variation in the estimation process (Clark & Linzer, 2015). Testing with the Hausman test indicates that FE is preferable to RE across model specifications ($p < 0.001$). Scholars have debated about the appropriate model, driven either by their goals or by using the Hausman specification test. Nevertheless, Clark and Linzer (2015) argue that this test sometimes indicates fixed-effects (FE) due to insufficient statistical power rather than the absence of correlation between the independent variable and unit effect (α_i). The results for the FE are similar to the RE model. Using the Durbin-Watson test, I find no evidence of serial correlation in the error term. [Appendix 9](#) reports the results for the Hausman specification test.

Table 3.2: Random Effects (RE) of Class Appeals on Expressive Partisanship

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Labour Supporter × Appeal to Working-Class (-1;+1)	.096*** (.016)	.099*** (.017)	.118*** (.029)	
Labour Supporter × Appeal to Middle-Class (-1;+1)	-.032* (.016)	-.028 (.017)	-.037 (.027)	
Working-class × Labour Supporter × Appeal to Working-Class (-1;+1)			-.013 (.035)	
Working-class × Labour Supporter × Appeal to Middle-Class (-1;+1)			.016 (.035)	
Labour Supporter x Convergence in Class Appeal to Working-Class (0;1)				-.052* (.020)
Labour Supporter x Convergence in Class Appeal to Middle-Class (0;1)				.048* (.021)
Class Membership: Working-Class	-.008 (.006)	-.004 (.007)	-.002 (.012)	-.002 (.007)
Constant	.453*** (.007)	.460*** (.038)	.461*** (.038)	.450*** (.039)
Controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>N-Respondents</i>	3,839	3,081	3,081	3,081
Adjusted R-Squared	.115	.151	.152	.147
θ	.53	.53	.52	.52
σ_{ϵ}^2	.011	.01	.011	.011
σ_{α}^2	.018	.016	.017	.016

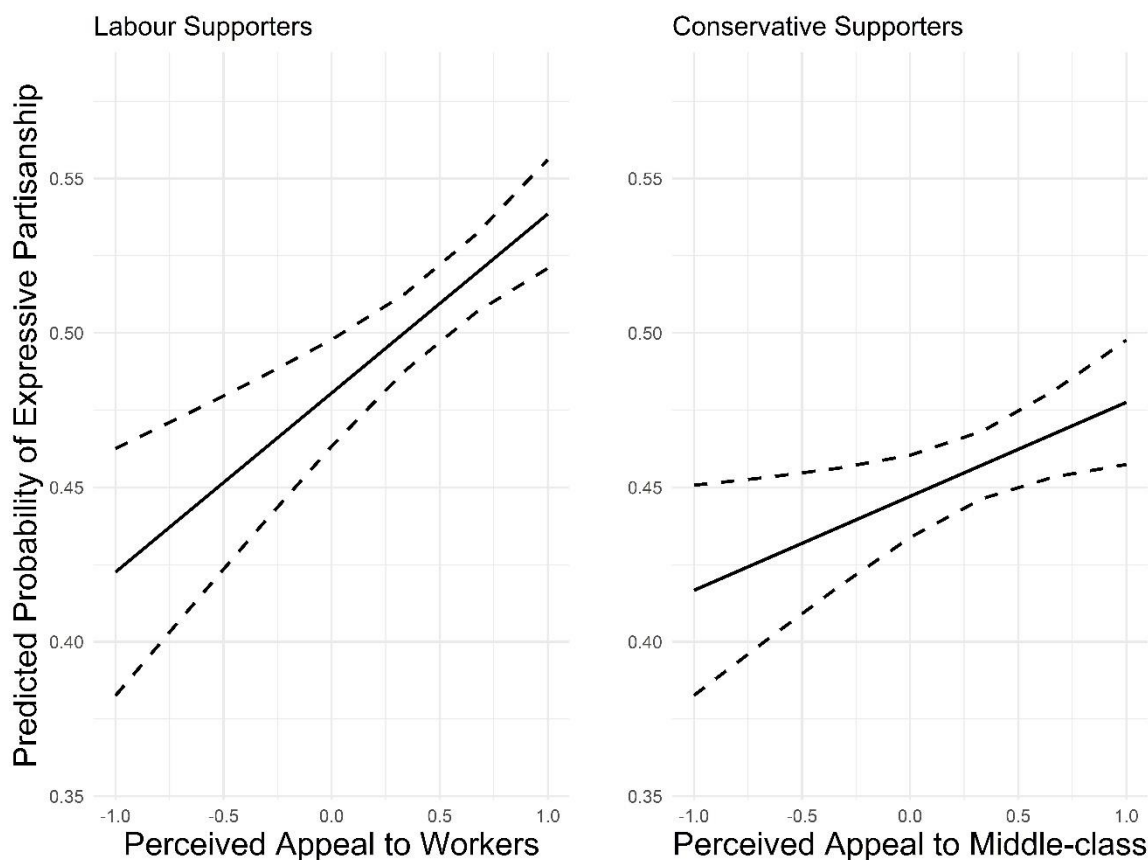
Notes: '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05

When considering whether class appeals impact expressive partisanship, the answer is yes. In Model 2, the intensity of expressive partisanship differs between Labour and

Conservative supporters when a party emphasizes its working-class ties, supporting the in-targeting hypothesis (H3.1a). There is a positive and significant interaction between Labour support and appeals to workers ($p < .05$). However, there is a negative, but not significant, interaction between Labour support and appeals to the middle class ($p < .1$). Through explicit appeals for the traditional class ties (i.e., the closer to +1 in the class appeal scale), growing perceptions of in-targeting workers intensifies expressive partisanship among Labour supporters by approximately .10 points. Thus, class appeals using the working-class are associated with more expressive partisanship when political parties appeal to traditional class ties, at least among Labour supporters and the working class, as predicted in H3.1a.

Based on Model 2, Figure 3.3 illustrates the perceptions of class appeals and the predicted expressive partisanship, helping us better understand this relationship. From the midpoint that divides in-targeting from out-targeting (i.e., out-targeting occurs when the perception of opposition appealing to a class division traditionally associated with the party is explicit), the model predicts a 0.5-point increase in the expressive partisanship of both groups of supporters. On the left panel, Labour supporters increasingly report a higher intensity of expressive partisanship with higher perceptions of appeals to workers (i.e., in-targeting). This positive and significant effect ($p < .05$) supports the in-targeting hypothesis (H3.1a). Labour partisanship intensifies from 0.48 (95% CI [0.46; 0.50]) to 0.54 (95% CI [0.52; 0.56]). Likewise, Conservative appeals to the middle class increase expressive partisanship. This positive, but not significant, effect does not support the hypothesis (H3.1b). Expressive partisanship among Conservative supporters increases from 0.45 (95% CI: [0.43, 0.46]) to 0.48 (95% CI: [0.46, 0.50]). Thus, although its statistical insignificance does not support H3.1b, the direction of the effect is as expected.

Figure 3.3: Effect of In-Targeting on Expressive Partisanship



Notes: Estimates and confidence intervals are based on a random-effects model reported as Model 2. The confidence intervals (CI) are calculated using the 95% confidence level. I estimate this model using the 'plm' package in R with individual effects and the Swamy-Arora (swar) estimator. Predicted probabilities were obtained using the 'ggeffects' package.

As Model 2 suggests that targeting class ties increases expressive partisanship, a subsequent inquiry refers to the possibility of reverse causation. One of the most significant outcomes that derives from expressive attachments is motivated reasoning, which alters people's reasoning to reach a specific conclusion (Huddy et al., 2018). Therefore, a key concern in interpreting these results is the potential for endogeneity between partisanship and perceptions of ingroup appeals. That is, as expressive partisanship increases, perceptions of in-targeting may also rise. Such a scenario would rule out the in-targeting hypothesis, since perceptions of party behaviour would only follow partisanship. Therefore,

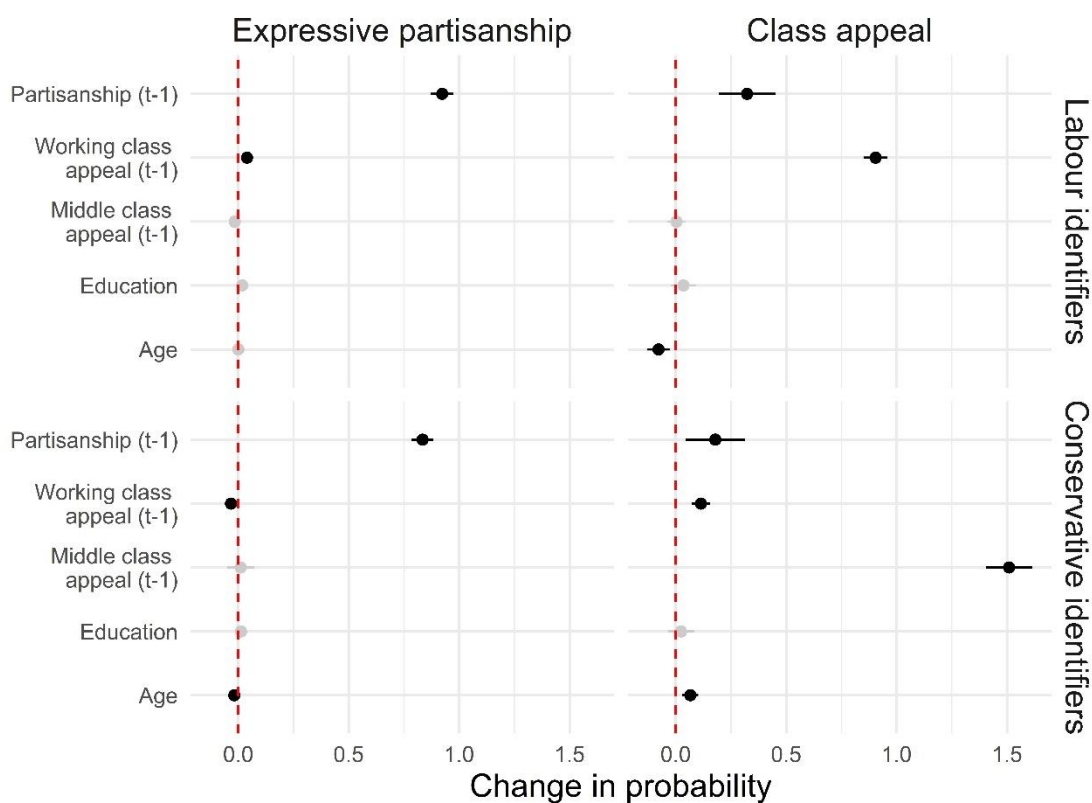
I expect perceptions of appeals and partisanship might impact each other over time. Doing this, partisans from both parties perceive in-targeting appeals and adjust their partisan identity (e.g., Mason & Wronski, 2018; Kane et al., 2021), which reinforces the group-party alignment (e.g., Ahler & Sood, 2018). If it is correct, the effect of class appeals may be persistent through expressive partisanship, as it returns a feedback loop of more group-party alignments.

For this test, a long panel dataset is necessary with repeated measures of expressive partisanship, which is extremely rare these days. With a long-term panel (4 years) and repeated measures of class appeals and expressive partisanship, the BES panel data enables the exploration of the causal effect between class appeals and expressive partisanship. Like other scholars (e.g., Highton & Kam, 2011; Lupu, 2016, p. 169), I run a cross-lagged structural equation model. This model estimates the effect of prior partisanship or appeal on current perceptions of class appeals or expressive partisanship, while controlling for prior observations of the dependent variable. This cross-lagged model investigates whether prior perceptions of class appeals impact expressive partisanship while considering the preexisting partisan identity as predicted by the in-targeting hypothesis. In addition, such a model explores whether prior identity influences perceptions of class appeals, while considering prior appeals.

Figure 3.4 displays the results for the cross-lagged regression. The results suggest a strong feedback loop between appeals and partisanship. First, for Labour identifiers, lagged appeals to the working class predict current expressive partisanship, as expected in the in-targeting hypothesis (H3.1a). This model also confirms that prior appeals to the middle class do not impact current expressive partisanship. Interestingly, among Conservative

identifiers, perceiving the party as appealing to the working class in the prior wave is associated with the decline of expressive partisanship. Since partisans see the party moving away from the ingroup towards the out-party group, this finding corroborates the idea that out-targeting decreases expressive partisanship.

Figure 3.4: Cross-lagged Model on Class Appeals and Expressive Partisanship



Notes: Values represent changes in predicted probability resulting from shifting each variable from its sample 25th to 75th percentile (e.g., Lupu, 2016), with all other variables held constant at their means. For Labour identifiers, I present class appeals toward the working-class as their ingroup. On the other hand, for Conservative identifiers, the figure presents appeals towards the middle class. The appeals from Labour to middle-class and Conservative identifiers to the working-class are available in [Appendix 10](#). The confidence intervals (CI) are calculated using the 95% confidence level.

Second, lagged partisanship predicts class appeals. For Labour (Conservative) identifiers, prior partisan identity explains current perceptions of appeals. However, confounders and measurement errors continue to threaten the estimation of the causal

effect. Future research should address these concerns using experimental designs that manipulate group-party alignment through group-based appeals.

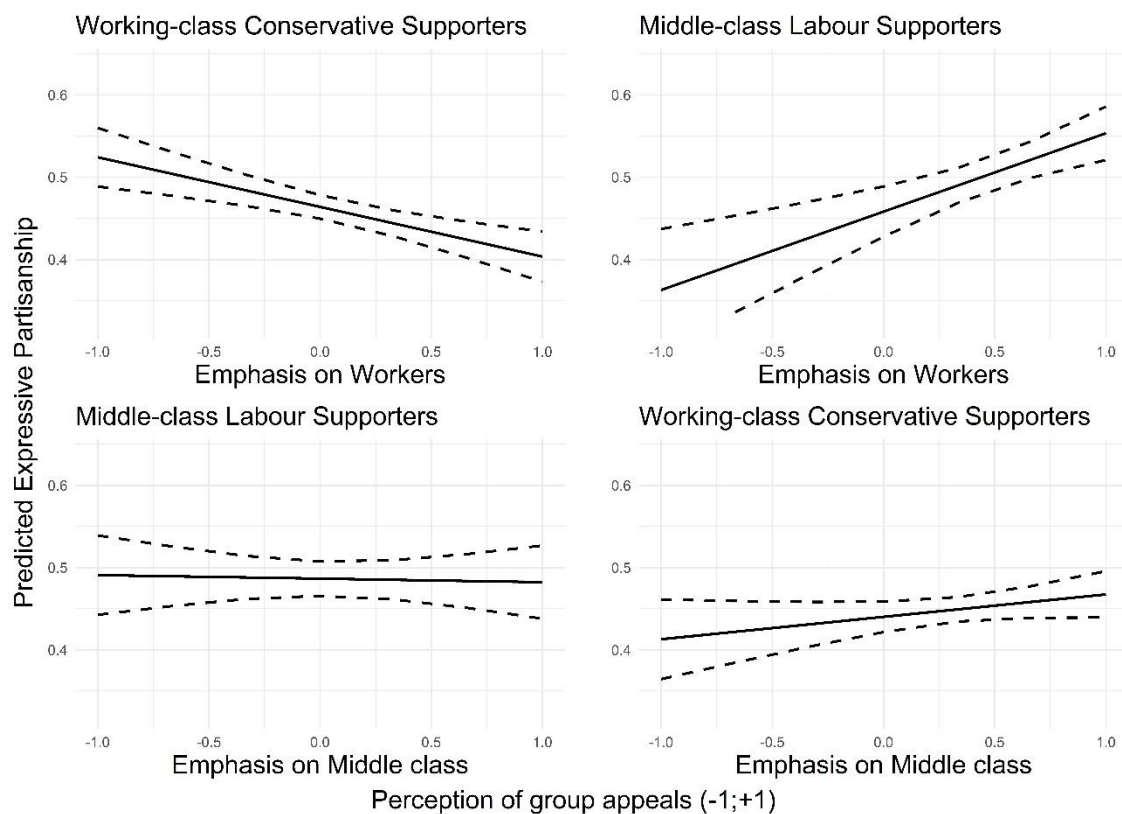
3.3.3. Cross-pressure and brand dilution hypotheses

Turning to aspects that might decrease expressive partisanship, conflicts between class memberships and party preference in class appeals may lead to cross-pressure. In Model 3, the three-way interactions do not reach statistical significance. Figure 3.5 displays the predicted expressive partisanship by party and class membership. In the top left panel, Conservative supporters with working-class membership report lower expressive partisanship when perceiving the Labour Party as appealing to workers, supporting the cross-pressure hypothesis (H3.2). Conservative partisanship decreases from 0.52 (95% CI [0.49; 0.56]) to 0.40 (95% CI [0.37; 0.43]). In the bottom left panel, middle-class Labour supporters, when perceiving appeals from the Conservative Party to the middle class, also decrease their expressive partisanship. However, this decline is insignificant and does not differ from Labour supporters who hold working-class identification and perceive the Conservative Party as appealing to their class identification, thus failing to support the cross-pressure hypothesis (H3.2).

Turning to examine the right column, expressive partisanship intensifies as appeals to traditional class ties increase. Although it conflicts with class membership in the top right panel, in-targeting is positively associated with Labour's expressive partisanship. When considering each party as closer to its traditional allies, expressive partisanship intensifies from 0.36 (95% CI [0.29; 0.44]) to 0.55 (95% CI [0.52; 0.59]). Conservative supporters also associate positively with class appeals that target the middle class, even those who

hold working-class identification. Their expressive partisanship strengthens from 0.41 (95% CI [0.36; 0.46]) to 0.47 (95% CI [0.44; 0.50]). Despite weaker evidence among Conservative workers, these results suggest that expressive partisanship is also influenced by the match of traditional party ties in group-based appeals, particularly in cases where group membership conflicts with partisan identity.

Figure 3.5: Effect of Cross-Pressure on Expressive Partisanship



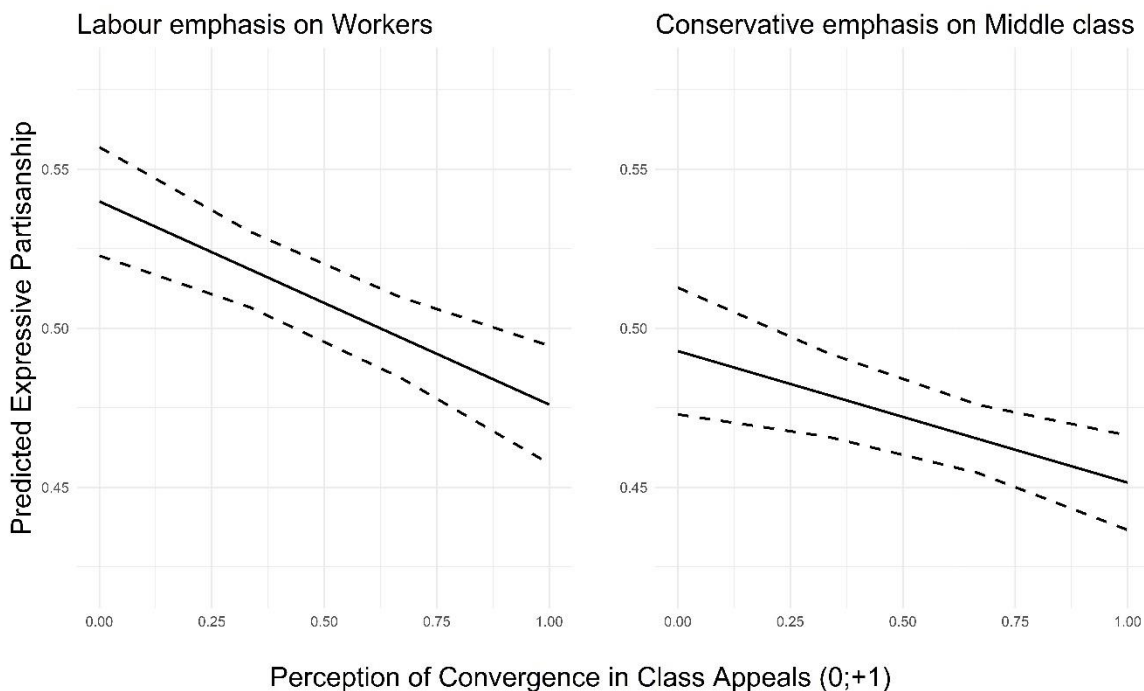
Notes: Estimates and confidence intervals are based on a random-effects model, as reported in model 3. The confidence intervals (CI) are calculated using the 95% confidence level. I estimate this model using the 'plm' package in R with individual effects and the Swamy-Arora (swar) estimator. Predicted probabilities were obtained using the 'ggeffects' package.

Figure 3.6 reports the predicted expressive partisanship when there is a convergence between Labour and Conservative parties in their class appeals. I expect that convergence in class appeals will reduce expressive partisanship compared to apparent differences in class appeals between the Labour and Conservative parties. I folded the targeting scale and

reversed it so that higher values (closer to 1) mean convergence between appeals to a particular class division.³⁶ In Model 4, both interactions reach statistical significance and have the expected sign ($p < .05$). While Labour supporters react negatively with convergent appeals to the working class, Conservative supporters also negatively respond with convergent appeals to the middle class, supporting the Brand dilution hypothesis (H3.3). Thus, distinguishing it from other party targeting, a clear class appeal remains decisive in shaping the intensity of partisanship among supporters of the two political parties.

In the Figure, the left panel describes the predicted values for Labour's expressive partisanship when Labour supporters notice convergence in appeals to workers, and the right panel describes the predicted values for Conservative supporters when they perceive convergence in appeals to the middle class. As expected, expressive partisanship decreases with perceptions of convergence in appeals to workers among Labour supporters, varying from 0.54 (95% CI [0.52, 0.56]) to 0.48 (95% CI [0.46, 0.49]). This result supports the Brand dilution hypothesis, which posits that Labour's expressive partisanship decreases as perceptions of convergence between the two parties in appeals to the working class increase. In the right panel, the result also supports the hypothesis. Conservative expressive partisanship decreases by 0.4 points from 0.49 (95% CI: [0.47; 0.51]) to 0.45 (95% CI: [0.44; 0.47]) with increasing perceptions of convergence in appeals to the middle class.

³⁶ The average of this scale is .61 (SD = .30) for convergence in the appeals to the working class, with 21% reporting convergence in this particular appeal. In the appeals to the middle class, the average is .68 (SD = .26), with 25% declaring convergence in appeals to this class division.

Figure 3.6: Effect of Brand Dilution in Class Appeals on Partisanship

Notes: Estimates and confidence intervals are based on a random-effects model, as reported in model 4. The confidence intervals (CI) are calculated using the 95% confidence level. I estimate this model using the 'plm' package in R with individual effects and the Swamy-Arora (swar) estimator. Predicted probabilities were obtained using the 'ggeffects' package

3.4. Discussion and Conclusion

British scholars have pointed out that dealignment with political parties and instability of voting decisions reflect the decreasing association between class and the two major parties. Despite the emergence of new cleavages and Brexit identities (e.g., Thau, 2019; Hobolt, Leeper, & Tilley, 2021), previous studies have primarily focused on class appeals and voting decisions to describe the consequences of class-party dissociation (e.g., Evans & Tilly, 2017; Thau, 2021). However, little attention has been paid to the influence of class appeals on the levels of partisanship among British voters. This chapter examines whether class appeals are linked to expressive partisanship within the Labour and Conservative parties. To summarize, the results from the structural model indicate different levels of

stability across different waves after the Brexit elections, with less stability among Conservative supporters. Examining how perceptions of class appeals are perceived also reveals a significant and positive correlation with expressive partisanship. This occurs when class appeals target traditional class ties, referred to as in-targeting. Specifically, when Labour appeals to workers, their supporters demonstrate heightened expressive partisanship. Conversely, the intensity of partisanship declines when parties distance themselves from their traditional class associations, leading to conflicts between class membership and party identification (known as cross-pressure) and when class appeals converge. I find evidence supporting the notion of brand dilution in class appeals. Therefore, although new events in Britain realigned voters with parties and promoted stability in voting decisions, in-targeting strategies appear to be a means for the British parties to foster stronger emotional attachments in their partisan bases, in addition to high salience of electoral shocks.

My findings suggest that perceived in-targeting—namely, appeals to traditional group ties—intensifies supporters’ partisanship, fostering a stronger sense of inclusivity and distinctiveness from the competition. Consistent with earlier expectations and across four models, these results suggest that connecting each party with its class ties intensifies partisanship across the support base. This suggests a distinct dynamic from voting models, which predict the expansion of the electorate through broad appeals to median voters or appeals centred on salient issues (e.g., Downs, 1957). There is clear evidence for the effect of brand dilution when both parties converge on class appeals. Partisanship decreases in intensity when convergence between class appeals among Labour and Conservative supporters is perceived.

As class-party associations decline in Britain, partisanship has been found to have less influence on the vote. Therefore, other short-term aspects play a decisive role in elections (e.g., Evans & Tilley, 2012; Garzia, 2013; Evans & Neundorf, 2020). Convergence in the policy offerings between Labour and Conservative parties is the primary reason for the dealignment between voters and the two British parties (Evans & Tilley, 2017). This brand dilution can also happen in perceptions of class appeals. Thau (2019; 2021) argues that the Labour and Conservative parties have incorporated different groups into their social coalitions (e.g., age, education, families), equally appealing to the middle class. This strategy left the working class without a party alliance. Grant and Evans (2023) focus on the Labour Party's appeal to racial minorities, finding a cross-pressure between class membership and racial identity. In both instances, expressive partisanship is expected to decline in British politics. Nevertheless, as class voting tends to increase with class appeals (Thau, 2021), in-targeting as a strategy for reassociation seems compelling. Examining expressive partisanship suggests that the decision on which group to target in electoral material might impact loyalties in the electorate. Thus, it is partly in the party's control to manage realignment, stability of voting choice and engagement within its support base.

This chapter elucidates the relationship between group appeals and partisanship, revealing that class-party association remains relevant, even as the overall partisanship is declining. Moreover, previous studies predict that the cumulative inclusion of group identities (e.g., racial minorities, religious groups) within a coalition intensifies partisanship among partisans (e.g., Mason & Wronski, 2018; Kane, Mason, & Wronski, 2021). In these studies, the group appeals work as party cues that enhance awareness about group-party

associations, further prompting expressive partisanship strength. In the British case, class ties are crucial for understanding identity-based partisanship, as working- and middle-class individuals tend to divide between the two main parties (Evans & Tilley, 2012; Thau, 2021). When considering party brands, I consider pre-existing associations between groups and parties, which are well-known and, in many contexts, consistent over time (e.g., Lupu, 2016). As their traditional allies in the party brand, Labour supporters positively relay explicit Labour appeals to the working class. Thus, successful appeals should consider the relative advantage of targeting specific groups in their electoral materials, especially when deciding to leave a traditional alliance behind.

This chapter explores the relationship between perceptions of class appeals and the intensity of expressive partisanship. However, this chapter also has limitations. First, observational data limits the ability to establish causal inferences between class appeals and partisanship. An experimental design might better manipulate group appeals, further exploring differences and effects on voters' attachments. Second, since partisans perceive their party as closer to their preferred groups than other voters, an experimental setting may reduce the potential for endogeneity in the relationship between group-based appeals and partisanship (see Ahler and Sood 2018 for biases in perceptions of the party's social composition). Although I only consider partisan voters, there is evidence that perceptions of elite behaviour shape party preference and evaluations (see Lavine, Johnston, and Steenbergen 2012 for partisan ambivalence). While these studies focus on a party's behaviour that decreases loyalty, this chapter highlights when a party can bolster partisanship among its supporters. An experiment may rule out alternative explanations that partisanship influences perceptions of group-based appeals. Third, the findings suggest that

the strategic approach of group-based appeals explains partisanship using just class cleavage. Scholars should examine the effects of group-based appeals by exploring multiple groups. Finally, future research may conduct direct examinations for the mechanisms, such as affinities (e.g., Huber, Meyer & Wagner, 2022) and emotions (Stubager & Thau, 2025), comparing group by group (i.e., Brexit identity groups) and their impacts on several political outcomes, such as partisan support.

Future studies should explore these contexts, examining whether political parties have broadened their group-based appeals or if the group-party association has declined and been replaced, and the impact of these decisions on voters' attachments to political parties and voting decisions. In the 2021 Canadian elections, the Conservative Party broadened its appeal to several groups compared to the 2019 federal elections, without changing its electoral performance. Thus, there is a possibility that partisanship has reacted and changed across these two elections due to the party's strategies to dilute the brand. Another possibility for future research is where political parties have distanced themselves from traditional cleavages. Religious appeals have declined among German parties, and the west/east division has gained prominence in that context (Dalton, 2013). Religious and regional identities can intersect, thereby decreasing expressive partisanship. Examining group appeals through expressive partisanship suggests that party-level strategies, such as in-targeting, may lead to increased engagement and stability in voting decisions across these political contexts.

The current distance between the major British parties and their class divisions allows for the analysis of class appeals and their connection to partisanship. Besides policy offerings and opinion-based identities, political parties intensify partisanship through

perceptions of class appeals. This party-level influence on voters' attachment points to an optimistic perspective for democracy and a long-term trend in British politics. On the one hand, affective polarization has called attention to the growing hostility across partisan groups, informational biases, and political violence. On the other hand, a certain level of expressive alignment approximates voters to political parties, which engage in politics and stabilize voting decisions, further protecting the party system from populist' adventures. Although British politics appears to be influenced by Brexit, perceptions of class divisions persist and are associated with expressive partisanship within partisan groups.

4. Soliciting Commitment: How Parties Shape Partisan Attachments

There is a longstanding debate about the foundations of partisanship. Distinctive views of partisanship diverge into either an instrumental attachment based on policy agreements and performances (Fiorina, 1981; Abramowitz & Saunders, 2006) or expressive partisanship based on social identities and group ties (Huddy et al., 2015). From this latter view, a large body of research demonstrates that expressive partisanship plays a pivotal role in enhancing affective polarization (Dias & Lelkes, 2021), in shaping citizens' motivated reasoning (Peterson & Iyengar, 2021), and increasing stability in voting decisions (Green, Palmquist, & Schickler, 2002). However, despite multiple studies about both views of partisanship, researchers have yet to fully understand how expressive attachment intensifies and why this attachment changes citizens' behaviour.

From *The American Voter* (Campbell et al., 1960) to more recent models (e.g., Groenendyk, 2013; Arceneaux & Vander Wielen, 2017), partisan identity has been mostly framed as an individual-level factor. Socialization, personal traits, and partisan motivations explain why people develop partisanship as a social identity and how expressive attachment influences policy preferences and performance evaluations. A few models are dedicated to explaining expressive attachments beyond individual-level factors (e.g., Kollman & Jackson, 2021). Among these models, two are noteworthy. First, the Branding Model of Partisanship has shown that party strategies can blur differences between opponents and partisan supporters and, as a result, weaken attachments and electoral stability (Lupu, 2013; 2016). Second, the Group Sentiment Model of Partisanship (GSMP) demonstrates that for partisans informed about party connections with an unfavorably viewed group, the appeal

of partisan identity is diminished (Kane, Mason, & Wronski, 2021). As these works indicate how partisan identity, and in particular expressive partisanship, declines, they also suggest how expressive attachments may be boosted by associations with the party and the consequences of partisan identities on partisan polarization and voting decisions.

There is a gap in this literature when it comes to the role political parties play in shaping expressive partisan identity. Parties influence public opinion by informing voters about policy positions and group affiliations through cues (Bullock, 2011) while also priming predispositions (Tesler, 2015). As partisan identity reflects the coalition of social identities that exist within a party (Mason & Wronski, 2018), parties can use group ties to prime expressive partisan identities. Some strategies involve using appeals to build group coalitions, known as group-based appeals (Hersh & Schaffner, 2013). These appeals are tailored messages emphasizing group affiliations to leverage support. Although scholars have documented the total effect of appeals on polarization (Huber, Meyer, & Wagner, 2024) and, more often, voting choice (Thau, 2021; Robison et al., 2021), the use of group-based appeals as a factor that boosts engagement by increasing expressive attachments is theoretically underdeveloped and empirically unclear.

Here, I test a Targeting Model of Partisanship (TMP), in which it is theorized that group-based appeals to existing group-party associations can increase the influence of expressive partisanship. Group-based appeals differ in their effectiveness regarding specific group ties (Iyengar & Valentino, 2000). Prior group-party associations within party images have been found to be pivotal in current literature (e.g., Rahn, 1993; Ahler & Sood, 2018; Orr & Huber, 2021). For example, some groups are historically connected with a party. This strategy refers to targeting in-groups whose prior group-party association is well-known

and a product of longstanding connections (or in-targeting). On the other hand, strategies can also include appealing to out-groups associated with the opposition coalition to explore potential vulnerabilities (Hillygus & Shield, 2008), known here as out-targeting, and/or broad appeals to groups without a clear association with any party (Sommer-Topcu, 2015). Therefore, the TMP argues that partisans, when exposed to in-targeting, tend to feel closer to groups affiliated with their party even if they are not affiliated with the group. Relative to broad appeals, in-targeting primes the prototypical member in terms of partisan identity, an image of the people traditionally supporting the party, which is developed in partisans' minds through socialization. Through in-targeting, a party boosts expressive attachments because there is no explicit policy content that could influence instrumental partisanship. It enhances the impact of its appeals on several citizen behaviours, associated with a personal and emotional reaction to politics. By comparison, out-targeting decreases the distance between the party stereotype and the proximity of the opposition coalition. There is a risk of blurring differentiation from the opposition coalition, which can result in a decline of expressive attachments and decreased effects on behaviour, relative to broad appeals that do not confuse the party stereotypes. Hence, prior associations are central in the TMP. As group-based appeals increase awareness about the groups a party prioritizes, emphasis on prior associations primes expressive partisan identity. The TMP combines prior information with the parties' central role in shaping partisan attachments, while considering how expressive partisanship shapes behavioural outcomes.

Drawing upon a survey experiment ($n = 1,430$) with four randomly assigned group-based appeals (i.e., to Canadians, unionized workers, foreign workers, and business owners), I demonstrate that in-targeting appeals enhance expressive attachments, but not

instrumental attachments, relative to broad appeals and out-targeting appeals. Surprisingly, my results reveal that out-targeting appeals also increase expressive partisan attachments relative to broad appeals, suggesting that partisanship relies on appealing to specific groups rather than targeting a group without a clear association to any party. Testing whether partisan attachments shape the relationship between targeted appeals and behavioural outcomes, I find that partisanship is a key mechanism for affective polarization and a relevant moderator for in-party voting.

This chapter advances the study of the interplay between group identities, political parties and partisanship. First, it highlights political parties as forces that can develop and change expressive partisanship. Second, I test and demonstrate the classification of appeals involving prior associations. Previous models have incorporated the alignments between group and party as integral for partisanship (Kane et al., 2021) or prior information alone (Lupu, 2013; 2016). Prior associations with group ties enable the classification of targeted appeals into the three categories (i.e., in-targeting, out-targeting, and broad appeals), which expands on previous studies' contributions. For example, appeals that diverge from a party's image have been overlooked in what little scholarship that integrates party appeals exists, regardless of whether an opposition group or everyone is targeted. Third, this chapter takes a broad view of the types of attachments that these appeals can impact. I provide an update to models of partisanship that explore effects from either group identities or policy stances, investigating the impact of appeals on both instrumental and expressive partisanship. I also account for the interplay between partisanship using a multi-mediator method. Further, these findings have a normative implication for theories about parties and partisanship. Whereas expressive partisanship can produce undesirable outcomes for democracy, such as

loathing across partisan groups, a substantial part of this attachment can be related back to parties as a source. As parties influence partisan predispositions through targeted appeals, the emphasis on partisanship as a threat to democracy overlooks the role of elites and their strategies for the current scenario of deep divisions and potential solutions for hostilities among citizens.

4.1. Theoretical Framework

4.1.1. Previous models of partisanship and its consequences

Harkening back to the original formulation in *The American Voter*, partisanship is a longstanding psychological attachment to a political party. This original formulation, however, has been challenged over the years. Two distinct views have been developed about the foundations, stability and consequences of partisanship. Based on a rational choice approach, revisionists of the original formulation posit that partisan attachments reflect a ‘running tally’ of policy positions, ideology, and leader performances on critical issues (Fiorina, 1981; Abramowitz & Saunders, 2006). This instrumental view of partisanship can be stable, but not fixed, like social identifications, as accumulated positive evaluations increase the stability of partisan attachments (Groenendyk, 2013). Furthermore, the conceptualization of instrumental partisanship suggests a desirable attachment: voters are oriented by policy issues and hold parties accountable for policy changes. On the other hand, and unlike instrumental partisanship, Huddy et al. (2015) formalized an expressive view of partisanship. Based on identity politics, expressive partisanship reflects a social identity, a stable sense of personal connection and belonging with a partisan identity. While Huddy et al. find that expressive partisanship predicts greater participation and involvement

in politics, it also contributes to intergroup loathing, motivated reasoning, and a lack of accountability in voting decisions (see also Huddy et al., 2018).

Despite the sharp contrast between instrumental and expressive attachments, the foundation of expressive attachment remains less understood than instrumental partisanship. Much research suggests that policy positions follow partisan identity (Carsey & Layman, 2006; Dancey & Goren, 2010; cf. Garzia, 2013). Hence, these studies implicitly suggest that expressive partisanship will dominate instrumental partisanship in individual attachments across multiple scenarios. Nevertheless, these studies have never ruled out instrumental attachments (Bankert, 2024). In the US and European countries, instrumental partisanship is also associated with enthusiasm, and it has a higher effect in predicting behavioural outcomes in multiparty systems, where policy differentiation is more pivotal (e.g., Bankert et al., 2017). However, expressive attachment likely dominates the interplay between the types of partisanship views and influences the strength of instrumental attachments.

Regarding expressive attachment as a dependent variable, two models of partisanship deserve specific attention. Table 4.1 summarizes these two models of partisanship that serve as the basis for the next steps of my chapter. The first model is the Branding Model, developed by Lupu (2016) out of concern about the dramatic decline in voting for established parties in Latin America. In a Bayesian learning process, in which partisans use prior information to update attachments, the model illuminates the role of parties in developing partisan identity. A key point in the Branding Model is that this prior information builds a prototypical image of policy preferences and group affiliations related to party labels, known as party brands. Whereas political parties react to societal divisions

when determining the alliances they can represent (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967), parties also aim to win elections and bargain with group coalitions (Sartori, 1976). When policy agendas are clear, prior information can influence the strength of partisan attachments when there are political disputes over attracting out-partisans. Using experiments with electoral platforms, Lupu finds that when platforms converge with another party, partisan identity strength declines. A significant consequence of the model is that, without partisan identity, established parties become vulnerable to performance evaluations and an eventual decline in party voting. In contrast, Lupu considers that parties can increase partisan identity strength by comparing and enhancing the ideological distinction between the electoral platforms. Finally, age and political information moderate the effect of ideological differentiation, as voters have varying degrees of prior brand association at the top of mind, which impacts how young people and informed voters update their partisan attachments (Lupu, 2013, p. 54).

Table 4.1: Summary of Models with Partisan Identity as Dependent Variable

	Group Sentiment Model of Partisanship (Kane, Mason, and Wronski, 2021)	Branding Model (Lupu, 2013; 2016)
<i>Context</i>	The American bipartisan system	Latin American multiparty systems (e.g., Argentina and Venezuela)
<i>Partisan Attachment</i>	Expressive partisanship, measured by the Expressive Scale (Huddy et al., 2015).	Partisan identity strength is measured by the strength of party identification on a 0-10 scale.
<i>Mechanism</i>	Awareness of out-group support and group affect.	Alliances/switching information on the policy agenda and prior information about party support.
<i>Consequences</i>	Partisan polarization	Evaluations and voting loyalty

Notes: These points reflect differences between the two models that explain partisan identity strength.

In current literature, the primary explanation for expressive attachment is group ties. Scholars from the group-based approach of partisanship argue that expressive partisan identity reflects a multitude of social identities (Mason, 2018; cf. Egan, 2020), in which groups sorted into partisan coalitions enhance partisanship for those who hold social identifications or even those that just like the social group that is associated with the party (Mason & Wronski, 2018). From this literature, Kane et al. (2021) propose the Group Sentiment Model of Partisanship (GSMP), which states that awareness of group affiliation and sentiments toward a group predict partisan identity strength among American voters. In a series of experiments, they inform participants about extreme group alignment with a party. Partisans weaken their attachments when an unfavourable group is associated with

their party, implying a pivotal role for group affect in the GSMP model. In contrast, partisan identity strengthens when unfavourable groups are associated with the opposition. The main consequence of this model is partisan polarization, since “partisanship operates, at least in part, via group sentiments related to social out-groups” (p. 1785).

Despite their complexity, comparing these models reveals some gaps in the partisanship literature. Unlike the GSMP, the Branding Model proposes that political parties are primarily responsible for partisan identity strength. While the model emphasizes how party strategy shapes allegiances, it also stresses that prior information affects learning about party positioning on policy issues. In the end, they have a significant impact on performance evaluations and in-party voting. Nevertheless, the Branding Model relies heavily on policy perceptions rather than the group-based foundation of partisanship (e.g., Achen and Bartels, 2016). Yet, early studies highlighted how groups are pivotal for political support. For example, Lazarsfeld et al. (1944) argue that preferences are the product of opposing forces stemming from group identities. The Branding Model refers to partisan identity strength and identity politics, focusing on comparative fit, but it is unspecified in terms of its view of partisanship. It focuses on the measurement of partisan identity strength, a scale that ranges from 0 to 10, which does not distinguish between the expressive or instrumental components.

By comparison, the GSMP incorporates group identities into the study of developing and intensifying expressive partisanship. The GSMP also measures partisan identity strength using the Expressive Scale, which provides construct validity for the dependent variable. However, the model only suggests a passive, not active, role for political parties in boosting expressive attachment. The mechanism is that partisans should

be aware of the group alignment, accepting or rejecting based on sentiments toward the group. Thus, the model cannot rule out expressive cue-taking, which enhances awareness and motivates partisans to seek consistency with the party stereotype while rejecting inconsistency with the party image (Rahn, 1993; Bakker, Lelkes, and Malka, 2020). Beyond awareness and sentiments, partisans ultimately adjust their support according to how well the prototypical group is associated with the party, avoiding inconsistencies with the party image (Kane, 2019).

In this chapter, the two highlighted models provide insights into the foundations and consequences of expressive partisan attachments. Yet they both look incomplete when compared to each other. Combining the strengths of these two models has the advantage of marrying a long tradition of a group approach to partisanship with the less explored perspective of the active role of political parties. Parties can work in multiple ways to influence citizens, specifically partisans attached to them. Leeper and Slothuus (2014) argue that parties tell citizens what political predispositions should be applied and how in politics. While parties are a political mobilizing force, group identities are the vehicle by which parties can prime predispositions like partisan identity (e.g., Tesler, 2015). Thus, a fundamental question is which aspect of group identities is needed to prime partisanship among supporters. In the next section, I review the active role of political parties, prior associations, and the aspects of groups that influence expressive attachments in the Targeting Model of Partisanship.

4.1.2. The Targeting Model of Partisanship

I propose a partisanship model that combines aspects of previous models to argue that political parties can shape expressive partisan attachments. The TMP connects the group

approach to partisan identity and expressive attachments from the GSMP with the learning process and the party's role from the Branding Model. Despite being the object of partisan attachments, political parties have often been relegated to the margins of partisanship models. In many cases, partisan attachments were the products of individual socialization (Campbell et al., 1960), political motivations (Groenendyk, 2013) or personal traits (Arceneaux & Vander Wielen, 2017). Little is known about the extent of active parties' impact on partisanship. Only in extreme events, like 'the big shift' after the civil rights era, has the role of parties in shaping partisanship been recognized (Green, Palmquist, Schickler, 2002). Although partisan attachments have been considered an undesirable factor for democracy due to the lack of responsiveness and accountability they facilitate (Arceneaux & Vander Wielen, 2017; White & Ypi, 2016), political parties otherwise have received positive evaluations since they are considered 'institutions of pluralism' and deliberative organizations (Aldrich, 1995). Nevertheless, parties are fundamental when explaining political commitment and partisan-driven outcomes. For example, scholars find that party behaviour can factor into affective polarization (Huber, Meyer, & Wagner, 2024) and motivated reasoning (Leeper & Slothuus, 2014). The TMP fills this gap by theorizing the relationship between parties and partisan-driven outcomes through changes in partisan attachments, from expressive to instrumental partisanship and vice versa. A key factor is how parties prime this expressive predisposition through their messages to the public.

Party cues may be the most common way to influence public opinion. They are messages that citizens rely on to infer and make political decisions (Bullock, 2011). Party cues inform citizens about parties' stances on policy issues and group affiliations to a party (Brader, Valentino & Suhay, 2008). Whereas a candidate's background can serve as a group

cue for voters who seek alignment with social identifications (Campbell, Green, & Layman, 2011), a growing body of researchers has dedicated itself to studying parties' rhetoric in group and policy appeals. In essence, group-based appeals are cues with a direct strategy from parties to mobilize a segment of the electorate. These appeals are tailored messages that increase perceptions of alignment between groups and parties, which is more common with the possibility of segmenting the online electorate (Hersh & Schaffner, 2013). They emphasize group preferences and party priorities towards a specific group, often including statements about the kind of people who benefit from the party or which groups the party supports in their policy positions. Unlike candidates' backgrounds, party members do not need to share social identifications. Knowing that the party supports a favourable group or a traditional ally should be enough. However, whether these appeals are persuasive and benefit the party is unclear.

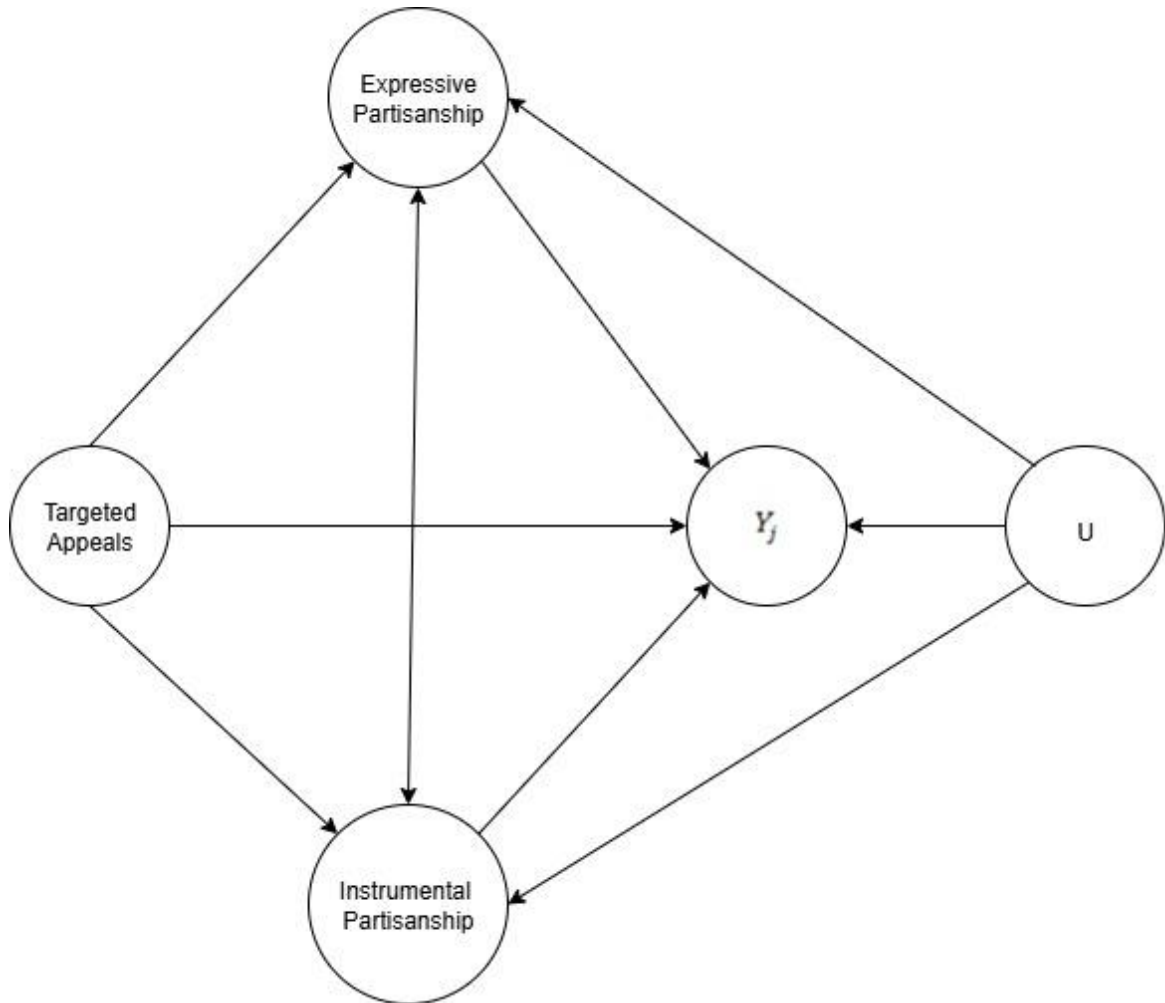
The informational values of group appeals are to increase awareness of alliances and gain support from shared affinities (e.g., Huber et al., 2024). Thus, these group appeals have an impact on group membership and voting decisions (Thau, 2021). For instance, Robison et al. (2021) demonstrate that appeals can effectively change preferences in the working class, which aligns with a party that targets this group. Moreover, group appeals can enhance awareness of a party's social composition, further prompting supporters to adjust and increase the significance of partisan identity in behavioural outcomes. However, the informational value of such appeals can be limited by the target audience (Iyengar & Valentino, 2000). Targeted appeals are more likely to be effective when a party appeals to a group with a traditional connection, as these appeals are likely to be seen as credible and

more easily accepted by partisan supporters. In contrast, targeted appeals toward groups allied with an out-party might be less accepted by in-party members.

In the TMP model, targeted appeals refer to group-based messages in which prior associations with the party can boost or diminish expressive partisanship strength. It differs from appeals based on affinities, as the term ‘targeted’ emphasizes the strategic component of these party messages. I describe the effects of targeted appeals on expressive partisanship and forms of engagement separately. In Figure 4.1, the Directed Acyclic Graph (DAG) describes the pathway of these targeted appeals: how parties directly influence public opinion through attachments.³⁷ This model emphasizes the role of parties in intensifying partisan identity and impacting the types of engagement that shape electoral performance. Therefore, a key attribute of group appeals in this model is to whom they are directed. Targeted appeals to core supporters underpin expressive partisanship by priming prior associations and group ties. Partisans are socialized to link the party label with the kinds of people who support the party. Targeted appeals to core supporters highlight membership and differentiation from other groups, thereby rendering the party’s image as a feature in partisan considerations. In-targeting refers to this category of targeted appeals that enhances support from groups associated with the in-party, which is well-defined and the product of a longstanding group-party association.

³⁷ The TMP considers the interconnection between expressive and instrumental partisanship. This is expressed in the DAG in two directions of the causal paths. In this chapter, I examine the impact of targeted appeals on expressive partisanship and its consequences, including instrumental partisanship. Future research should be dedicated to examining the effect of targeted on instrumental partisanship and its consequences, which involve expressive partisanship.

Figure 4.1: Directed Acyclic Graph (DAG) for TMP Model



Notes: The DAG illustrates the causal path from targeted appeals (A) to outcomes (Y) through expressive partisanship (M_1) and instrumental partisanship (M_2). Finally, unobserved confounders (U) influence the mediators and the outcomes, biasing the causal pathways.

Nevertheless, suppose the party seeks a broader coalition due to challenging times or electoral opportunities, such as the opposition's vulnerabilities after scandals. Parties can adjust their strategies to match contextual scenarios and electoral opportunities to maximize benefits. Out-targeting reflects an appeal to groups in the opposition coalition, eventually creating out-group cross-pressures (e.g., Hillygus and Shields, 2008). On the other hand, partisan supporters, perceiving an out-group appeal, may notice a proximity between their

party and other groups, which can diminish their sense of differentiation (Lupu, 2013; 2016). Another possible type of appeal, which serves as a baseline for comparison with targeted appeals, is broad appeals. Somer-Topcu (2015) defines broad appeals as a strategy that “can help parties gain votes, provided they can convince different groups of voters with diverse preferences that the party is now closer to their preferred ideological position” (p. 842). In group-based terms, broad appeals refer to target groups that do not have a clear association with any party. When using broad appeals, a party does not compromise with any side and projects an image of inclusiveness and moderation. Unlike targeted appeals, broad appeals do not rely on prior associations and are likely not to impact partisan attachments.

In the DAG above, the TMP predicts direct and indirect effects from targeted appeals on partisan attachments. When targeted appeals are perceived as in-targeting, they prime partisan identity from prior associations with group ties. The TMP argues that in-targeting will increase expressive attachment as supporters perceive the alignment between the in-party and traditional groups within the party image. Therefore, partisans will report more intense expressive attachments, since in-targeting emphasizes the prototypical membership through the kinds of people supporting the party. In contrast, out-targeting primes the proximity between the party and out-groups, which decreases the sense of differentiation from other parties. In turn, expressive attachments will be weaker. The TMP also assumes that expressive and instrumental attachments are interrelated and reciprocal. As some groups are associated with specific policies (e.g., women and social issues), instrumental attachments can increase through direct, impacting expressive partisanship over time (Bankert, 2024), and enhanced expressive attachment. Out-targeting can also

directly and indirectly affect instrumental partisanship, since benefits for specific groups can be considered unnecessary policy costs.

The TMP argues that partisanship mediates the effect of targeted appeals on behavioural outcomes. In this chapter, I explore the three outcomes predicted from the targeting effect and expressive partisanship. First, studies indicate that party rhetoric can shape polarization in the electorate (Druckman, Peterson, & Slothuus, 2013). As targeted appeals prime the prototypical membership, the direct effect of these appeals is to increase the distance between liking the in-party and disliking the out-party. In the GSMP model, group sentiments toward the out-party partly influence partisan identity and, consequently, polarization. Expressive and instrumental attachments in this case represent the primary mechanisms of affective polarization (Iyengar et al., 2019). Second, partisanship mediates the effect of party strategy on voting, but it is not the primary mechanism in the Branding Model. Lupu (2016) argues that, after losing partisan identity, negative evaluations impact voting. In this case, the mediation effect of attachments is substantial, but not necessarily larger than the direct effect of party strategies. Lastly, partisan elites (Bisgaard & Slothuus, 2018) and expressive attachments (Bankert et al., 2017) fundamentally influence motivated reasoning. After in-targeting, partisan motivation plays out in reasoning, causing partisans to reach a conclusion that follows their identity rather than being accurate about political objects. In this form of engagement, partisan attachments are key mechanisms that drive the effect of party appeals on citizens' reasoning.

4.1.3. Overview and hypothesis testing

This chapter develops a model that explains expressive partisanship and how it drives polarization, motivated reasoning, and voting in a support base. Derived from the Branding

Model and the GSMP, the TMP emphasizes the role of parties through targeting with group priorities. Empirically, this chapter tests whether targeted appeals match, mismatch, or are non-matched with partisans' predisposition using different groups. Since prior association is the key factor in group cues, this chapter looks at the relative difference between group appeals based on previous perceptions of group-party associations. I test both in-targeting and out-targeting relative to the perception of broad appeals.

I test hypotheses that consider the impact of targeted appeals on expressive attachments relative to broad appeals. As the TMP model involves a group approach to partisanship, the focus here is on expressive attachment since the foundations of this attachment have been less understood. Expressive partisanship refers to belonging and differentiation across partisan and group identities. Therefore, the TMP posits the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4.1 (Targeted Appeal Hypothesis): Targeted appeals will impact expressive partisanship relative to broad appeals.

Hypothesis 4.1a (In-targeting Hypothesis): In-targeting appeals will increase expressive partisanship.

Hypothesis 4.1b (Out-targeting Hypothesis): Out-targeting appeals will decrease expressive partisanship.

For comparison, I also test how prior associations of targeted groups impact instrumental attachments. This view of partisanship refers to a “running tally” of policy performances and leadership evaluations. Along with the expressive partisanship analysis, I run alternative models with instrumental partisanship as the dependent variable.

Targeted appeals have been shown to predict multiple types of behaviour outcomes (e.g., Thau, 2021; Robison et al., 2021; Huber et al., 2024). The TMP model predicts that expressive and instrumental attachments drive the effects of targeted appeals on each behavioural outcome. As the model assumes that expressive partisanship dominates, I order these attachments so that the effect passes through the expressive attachment before the instrumental one. Further, I focus on comparisons between in-targeting and other appeals, examining whether influencing partisan attachments shapes engagement in different forms. I expect the mediation effect of partisan attachments to be significant and positive. In all cases, I also examine the significance of the total and direct effects of targeting. Based on the literature and argumentation above, I therefore proceed with the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4.2 (Polarization Hypothesis): If partisan attachments increase, in-targeting will increase the difference between in- and out-parties' feelings.

Hypothesis 4.3 (Reasoning Hypothesis): In-targeting will increase directional motivations if partisan attachments increase.

Hypothesis 4.4 (Voting Loyalty Hypothesis): In-targeting will increase the likelihood of voting in one's party if partisan attachments increase.

4.2. Data, Design, and Measurements

To test the TMP model, I use experimental survey data about the Canadian party system. In Canada, party behaviour is central in explaining partisan attachments (e.g., Clarke et al., 2019). The long tradition of brokerage politics, the party strategy of accumulating diverse interests across regions in policy agendas (Cross & Young, 2002), has downplayed partisan alignments (Cochrane, 2015). For this reason, the Canadian party system is the 'least likely'

to see parties driving partisanship through group appeals. However, recent studies have shown that partisan attachments are durable even during difficult times (Gidengil et al., 2012), and accumulated evidence suggests a growing division and engagement in public opinion (Kevins & Soroka, 2018; Matthews & Pickup, 2019; Merkley, 2022). This trend remains a puzzle. Hence, the Canadian case can inform other contexts in which partisanship has been historically moderate, but new trends suggest an engaged and more divisive politics.

I designed an online survey experiment (N = 1,464) among Ontario residents from May 8 to 17, 2024, to collect responses about partisan attachments.³⁸ As this chapter focuses on partisan responses to targeted appeals, only participants who identified with a party during the survey are included in the analysis.³⁹ About 84% of the sample (n = 1,233) identified as Conservative, Liberal, or NDP. In this study, participants were exposed to group-based appeals from one of the three parties in a vignette and asked questions about their partisan attachments (i.e., expressive and instrumental ones). They also asked questions about party ratings, voting intentions, and reasoning about housing policy to measure motivated reasoning. The survey concludes with questions about political involvement and sociodemographics.

³⁸ This study initially surveyed 1,964 respondents from Ontario, Canada. However, participants were removed from this analysis due to not meeting the consent, citizenship, or age criteria (n = 283). Additionally, I removed participants due to the duration of their surveys (i.e., speeders are defined as those whose survey duration was a third of the median sample duration, n = 41) as well as participants who failed an attention check (n = 170). The preregistration details are available at <https://osf.io/85d4w/>

³⁹ [Appendix 11](#) provides the demographic breakdown of this sample compared to the 2021 Canadian Census. Other partisans and non-identifiers received a random label with an appeal in the experiment. Yet, they were not asked to complete the expressive partisanship scale battery of questions. Instead, these participants answered questions about the centrality of their political identity, party evaluations, motivated reasoning, and vote choice. [Appendix 12](#) presents the results for this scale.

The experimental part of the survey highlights two critical items: party identification and prior associations. Party identification is collected by a standard measure (“In federal politics, do you usually think of yourself as a [party identification]?”) or a follow-up question for participants who said, ‘don’t know’ and ‘prefer not to answer’ (“Do you generally think of yourself as a little closer to one of the parties than the others? If yes, which party?”). In the vignettes, a party name was piped into the question to align with the respondent’s party preference. Second, participants were asked to choose the party that best represented each group (i.e., Canadians, foreign workers, unions, business owners).⁴⁰ Prior associations were measured before the treatment in the survey, so they were interacted with the group appeal and became a key factor. This fits with the conceptualization of targeted appeals, which refers to a subjective (mis)match between the message and the recipient’s predisposition. Hence, targeted appeals were interacted with the prior group-party association questions to generate a measure of this matching.

Table 4.2 summarizes the given combinations of group-based appeals for each party. Participants were told that a hypothetical candidate was running for the party. In the experiment, I manipulated the named cleavages with different associations with the participant’s party. Each vignette mentions that the candidate said: “We in the [**Party**] believe it is time for politicians to prioritize [**Group**]. As the candidate of the party, I will work to support [**Group**] in Canada.” There can be a debate about whether mentioning “Canadians” constitutes a neutral counterfactual condition for all other cleavages. Unlike the others used in the chapter, this cleavage can be claimed by any party without making

⁴⁰ I present distributions only for the economic cleavages. [Appendix 13](#) displays the full distribution of group-party associations for cleavages.

the combination unrealistic.⁴¹ Because I made this cleavage available for all three parties, and to make it more inclusive, I use the term “everyone” to avoid potential segments that claim the national identity more strongly in the group mention in the vignette. For the other groups, I avoided deception by not pairing an unrealistic party with certain respective groups (e.g., the NDP candidate appealing to business owners). I paired each cleavage group with at least two parties, so each party’s supporters had a one-third chance of being assigned to one cleavage.

Table 4.2: Combinations of Cleavages and Parties in Experimental Vignettes

PARTY	Canadians	Business Owners	Foreign Workers	Unionized Workers
Liberal Party	✓	✓	✓	X
Conservative Party	✓	✓	X	✓
NDP	✓	X	✓	✓

Notes: parties were paired with ‘all Canadians’ and two economic cleavages. The check mark refers to groups paired with the party. Supplemental Material C displays the distribution of people who associated parties with each cleavage.

I classify the matching appeals (T_i) based on the following:

$$T_i = Z_{ij} * A_{ij},$$

where Z_{ij} and A_{ij} refer to the appeal Z to targeted group j and the prior association of group j with party A for each respondent i . Therefore, I classify targeted appeals as in-targeting

⁴¹ As the group-party associations will demonstrate, participants associate ‘all Canadians’ with a couple of parties. Future research should investigate the most effective wording for broad appeals and create a “pure control” for elite appeals.

when a group appeal matches with the individual respondent's association of the party and the targeted group. For example, a Conservative identifier who received an appeal to business owners and previously associated the group with the Conservative Party is classified as receiving an in-targeting appeal. Out-targeting is when group j in Z mismatches group j in A for an individual respondent. This happened, for example, when a Conservative identifier received an appeal to unions and previously associated this targeted group with the NDP. Finally, I classify as broad appeals those participants who said "don't know" for the prior association question for the targeted group (i.e., non-match).

In the post-treatment survey, I asked participants about their expressive partisanship using the eight-item scale developed by Huddy et al. (2015). The Expressive Scale provides information about the strength of partisan identity in psychological and emotional terms. Through the items, the scale inquires about emotional involvement and feelings of connection between the individual and the party. In my data, the expressive scale exhibits good consistency ($\alpha = 0.86$) and a moderate sample average ($\bar{X} = 0.558$, s.e. = 0.005).⁴² For the first hypothesis, I estimate a conditional average treatment effect (CATE) on expressive partisanship between in-targeting and out-targeting relative to the broad appeals. I expect that in the in-targeting scenario, the estimate will be positive. As discussed earlier, I expect that in the out-targeting scenario, the same estimate will be negative.

In this chapter, I also examine instrumental partisanship using a five-item scale that assesses positions on social justice and redistribution.⁴³ This scale uses statements with

⁴² It also demonstrates good consistency for each party. For the Liberals, the alpha is 0.87, while for the Conservatives and NDP, it is 0.85 each.

⁴³ [Appendix 14](#) displays the wording for the expressive and instrumental partisanship scales along with their proportion by item. It also compares the traditional measure of partisanship strength.

which participants were asked to agree or disagree. It includes statements like “Government should redistribute income from those who are better off” and “There is one law for the rich and one for the poor.” I coded as more progressive those who agree with a greater “need for social justice and redistribution” and as more conservative those who disagree with these ‘values.’ This way, Conservatives have an inverted scale relative to Liberals and NDP to reflect the conservative positions. Conservatives with more conservative values in these items should have a greater instrumental attachment. The two progressive parties do not differ from each other. Although Liberals historically have more moderate views, researchers have shown that these parties have become more congenial around these issues (e.g., Cochrane, 2015). To create the instrumental scale, I combined the values scale with ideological intensity (i.e., a folded version of the ideological spectrum). The instrumental scale demonstrates acceptable consistency and a moderate average ($\bar{X} = 0.563$, s.e. = 0.004).

The other three hypotheses compare whether in-targeting treatment impacts polarization, reasoning, and voting through attachments. To test for the mediation effect of partisanship, I decompose the total impact of targeting using a path-specific effect (PSE) approach (Zhou & Yamamoto, 2023). This approach enables testing for multiple mediators and the sensitivity analysis of potential unobserved confounders between the mediator and outcome. The PSE estimates demonstrate the significance of targeting in producing partisan engagement and show the contribution of each mediator — expressive and instrumental partisanship — without assuming independence between these types of attachments. For the second hypothesis, I measure affective polarization using feeling thermometers about

each party in federal elections.⁴⁴ I calculate the standard deviation of these ratings and weight them based on the previous vote share. For the third hypothesis, I measure motivated reasoning by evaluating arguments about housing prices caused by international students across communities in Ontario. Without explicitly suggesting political positions in the preamble,⁴⁵ participants responded to whether the argument could be correct, positing a causal relationship based on the sample presented in the preface.⁴⁶ Participants who agreed with the argument without considering the validity of the sample and causality display directional over accurate motivations on the salient topic (Guay & Johnston, 2022). In this case, I coded as motivated reasoners those who judge the argument to be weak or stronger without considering external or internal validity. Finally, the fourth hypothesis examines voting intentions in non-electoral years (“If an election were held tomorrow, which party do you think you would vote for?”). I calculated the likelihood of in-party voting after targeting, mediated by partisanship.

To maximize statistical power, the experiment analyzed did not include a ‘no appeal’ condition that would work as a control. This design limitation should be addressed in future research. Thus, the interpretation of the treatment effect relates to the difference between targeted groups, which speaks to the prior association between the group and party, instead of the absolute effect of group appeals. Further, I test the effect of targeting across groups

⁴⁴ Except for the Bloc Québécois, which only runs the federal elections in Quebec.

⁴⁵ At least, Conservatives took a clear position on this topic issue. So, there is reason to expect motivated reasoning might be present using this specific issue.

⁴⁶ The preamble for the motivated reasoning question reads: “Here’s one recent argument about housing prices in Canada. We want to know how **weak** or **strong** you believe the argument is. Please put aside your feelings about housing prices and be as objective as possible. Experts have been talking about whether the rising number of international students is causing housing prices to go up [down]. Some experts looked at housing costs in 20 cities with international students and 20 cities without them. They argued that in cities with more international students, house prices increased [decreased] by 30% compared to cities without them.”

with different behavioural outcomes. These outcomes relate to forms of political engagement and include polarization, reasoning and in-party voting. These are all consequences presented in the models that provided insights for the TMP.

Online survey experiments require questions about the effectiveness of manipulation. Did participants pay attention to the cleavage in the targeted appeals? The uncontrolled environment and risks of inattentive participants threaten the findings' internal and external validity. Manipulation checks assess participants' attention to experimental manipulations. Following Kane and Barabas (2019), I included three checks in the survey to examine whether participants paid attention to the study overall and the targeted group in particular. First, I asked participants to choose the youngest political figure from a list while mentioning the youngest politician of the given options.⁴⁷ This check aims to identify participants who were attentive to instructions. Second, I asked for perceptions about parties' proximity to groups' interests (see Grant and Evans, 2023).⁴⁸ Each party has four response points, ranging from "not at all closely" (1) to "very closely" (4). I ran an ANOVA between the average response of participants who received each group treatment. In this check, I verify if participants' perceptions of party-group connections changed after the manipulation. Finally, I asked participants if they recalled which group the fictitious candidate appealed to. This check directly assesses whether participants were attentive to a specific aspect of the manipulated content.

⁴⁷ In the preface, I inform participants that: "paying attention and reading the instructions carefully are critical."

⁴⁸ This question reads: "Some people say that all political parties look after certain groups and are not so concerned about others. How closely do you think the [**Party**] looks after the interests of [**Group**]."

In the first check, 115 participants, about 9% of the original sample, failed to select the youngest politician on the list. They were removed from the analyses in this chapter. The question about party-group connections, the second manipulation check, suggests that the manipulations were successful. Except for appeals to union workers, the remaining ANOVA tests reach statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). Evaluations about group-party proximity differ between those who received one group and those who received another group. I tested differences within the same party across cleavages, which are also significant ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that alteration of perceptions after the experimental manipulation likely remained confined to the specific party and cleavage. In the last manipulation check, only 43% of the sample correctly indicated which group was presented.⁴⁹ However, the in- and out-targeting effects remain statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Although the difference between targeted appeals attains marginal significance ($p = 0.07$), the effect of in-targeting remains larger. Thus, the manipulation check findings suggest that the results of the study should be robust to issues of attention.

4.3. Results

4.3.1. The effect of targeted appeals on partisan attachments

I begin this analysis by describing prior associations between cleavages and Canadian parties in the sample. Figure 4.2 illustrates the distributions of these associations. The sample's most common association is between the Conservative Party and business owners (66%; $\chi^2(5) = 2478.3$, $p < 0.001$). The second most common association with business

⁴⁹ I remove those who failed the previous Attention Check, but I analyze those who failed the last manipulation check. I did not exclude these people, given the reduction in sample size it would have created. However, I find that they remain significant even when the inattentive people are included.

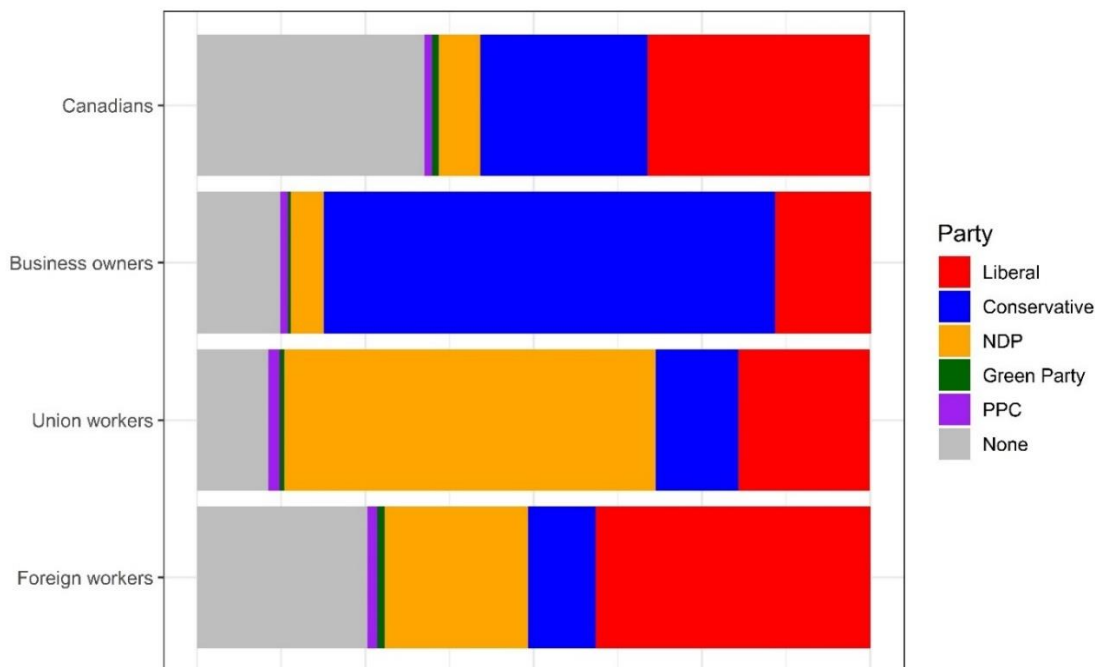
owners is the Liberal Party, at around 14%.⁵⁰ In the reported associations with foreign workers, the Liberal Party is the most commonly associated (44%; $\chi^2(5) = 933.47$, $p < 0.001$), followed by the NDP with 21%. Union workers are associated with the NDP in significant and large proportions (53%; $\chi^2(5) = 1500.4$, $p < 0.001$), followed by the Liberal Party at 19% and the Conservative Party at 13%. This distribution of associations remains unchanged when broken down by partisan affiliation (in and out-partisans). The most interesting distribution of group-party associations is for “Canadians”. Despite the large proportions of respondents who responded ‘don’t know’ about this association, some participants associated Canadians with a single party. That a national label remains associated with parties by many means it cannot work as it should to be considered a pure experimental control. However, considering broad appeals, among those who reported no associations with a party ($n = 593$), they are more frequent from appeals using ‘Canadians’ as a group.

Examining expressive and instrumental attachments, participants reported a moderate average of $\bar{X} = 0.504$ (s.e. = 0.006) for expressive partisanship and $\bar{X} = 0.567$ (s.e. = 0.011) for instrumental partisanship. I can compare these values in the in- and out-targeting treatments too, which correspond to when a participant’s targeted group has a prior association with a party. In the in-targeting treatment ($n = 349$), participants associated the targeted group with their party, and as expected, the average expressive attachment for participants in this treatment is significantly higher ($\bar{X} = 0.632$, s.e. = 0.008). The in-targeting treatment has the lowest instrumental value of the treatments ($\bar{X} = 0.552$, s.e. = 0.013). The out-targeting treatment ($n = 291$), in which participants associated the targeted

⁵⁰ More details in [Appendix 13](#).

group with another party, reports a lower average expressive attachment ($\bar{X} = 0.579$, s.e. = 0.008) and high instrumental partisanship ($\bar{X} = 0.568$, s.e. = 0.014).

Figure 4.2: Distribution of Group-Party Associations



Notes: The results show the proportion of participants who indicated prior association between a social group (i.e., Canadians, business owners, union workers, or foreign workers) and one of the political parties. In [Appendix 13](#), I present the distribution for the other groups in the party image battery, including Christians, women, and ethnic minorities. The alternative 'None' refers to participants who indicated "Don't know" to the party identification question.

To test the Targeted Appeal Hypothesis (H4.1), I compare the effects of in- and out-targeted appeals with the effects of broad appeal treatments across group-based conditions. Figure 4.3 displays the treatment effects by targeting treatments. Confirming the hypothesis, the prior association between the targeted group and party matters. As suggested by the In-targeting Hypothesis (H4.1a), an in-targeting treatment increases expressive attachments relative to broad appeals. The targeted appeals to core supporters suggest a proximity between the party's image and the group that has an impact on

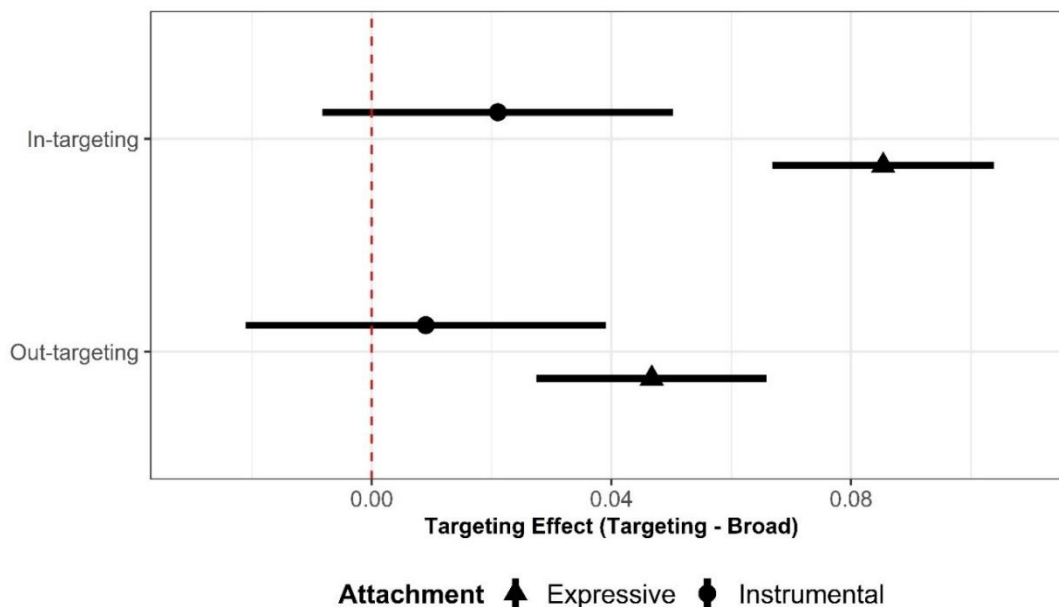
attachments. The effect size is relatively large and is statistically significant ($\beta = 0.09$; $p < 0.001$; 95% CI: [0.07 to 0.10]).⁵¹ This effect for expressive attachment is not reflected for instrumental attachments. Instrumental partisanship increases relative to broad appeals, but the margins are not statistically significant. In contrast to the results for H4.1a, the result does not confirm the direction of the Out-targeting Hypothesis (H4.1b), which expected the out-targeting treatment to decrease partisanship relative to broad appeals. The effect size is positive, and the difference is statistically significant ($\beta = 0.05$; $p < 0.001$; 95% CI: [0.03 to 0.07]). Again, instrumental attachments do not differ significantly between the out-targeting treatment and broad appeals. Comparing the effect sizes across treatments, expressive attachments in the in-targeting treatment are statistically higher than out-targeting, as expected ($\beta = 0.04$; $p < 0.001$, 95% CI: [0.02 to 0.06]). Although out-targeting has an unexpected positive effect, in-targeting exerts a stronger effect, in keeping with expectations.

To summarize, I examined the impact of targeted appeals on expressive and instrumental attachments. Targeted appeals are group-based messages that prime expressive attachments when prior associations between the group cleavage and a political party exist. The group-based appeals interacted with the priors, impacting how partisans assess their political identity. Appeals to core support groups lead to more expressive attachments than opposition groups or groups without a clear connection ($p < 0.001$). Although it might decrease differences between parties' coalitions, and thus dilute a party

⁵¹ Considering in-targeting or out-targeting by partisan group, party identification does not drive the direction effect. The effect of targeted appeals is positive and does not differ across partisan groups. However, a few results are statistically significant, while others are not. For instance, Conservative identifiers significantly increase expressive partisanship when in-targeted ($p < 0.05$). In contrast, Liberal identifiers decrease expressive partisanship when out-targeted ($p < 0.05$).

brand, an out-targeting treatment is not less effective than broad appeals in increasing expressive partisanship ($p < 0.001$).

Figure 4.3: Targeting Effect on Partisan Attachments



Notes: The results present the average expressive and instrumental partisanship effects estimated by individual OLS models, controlling for social group, party identification, age, gender, education, union status, birthplace in Canada, and political involvement (holding these variables at their mean values). The confidence interval (CI) is calculated using the 95% confidence level. The expressive and instrumental partisanship scales have been rescaled to range from 0 to 1. The in-targeting effect refers to the difference between in-targeting and broad appeal conditions. The out-targeting effect refers to the difference between out-targeting and broad appeal conditions.

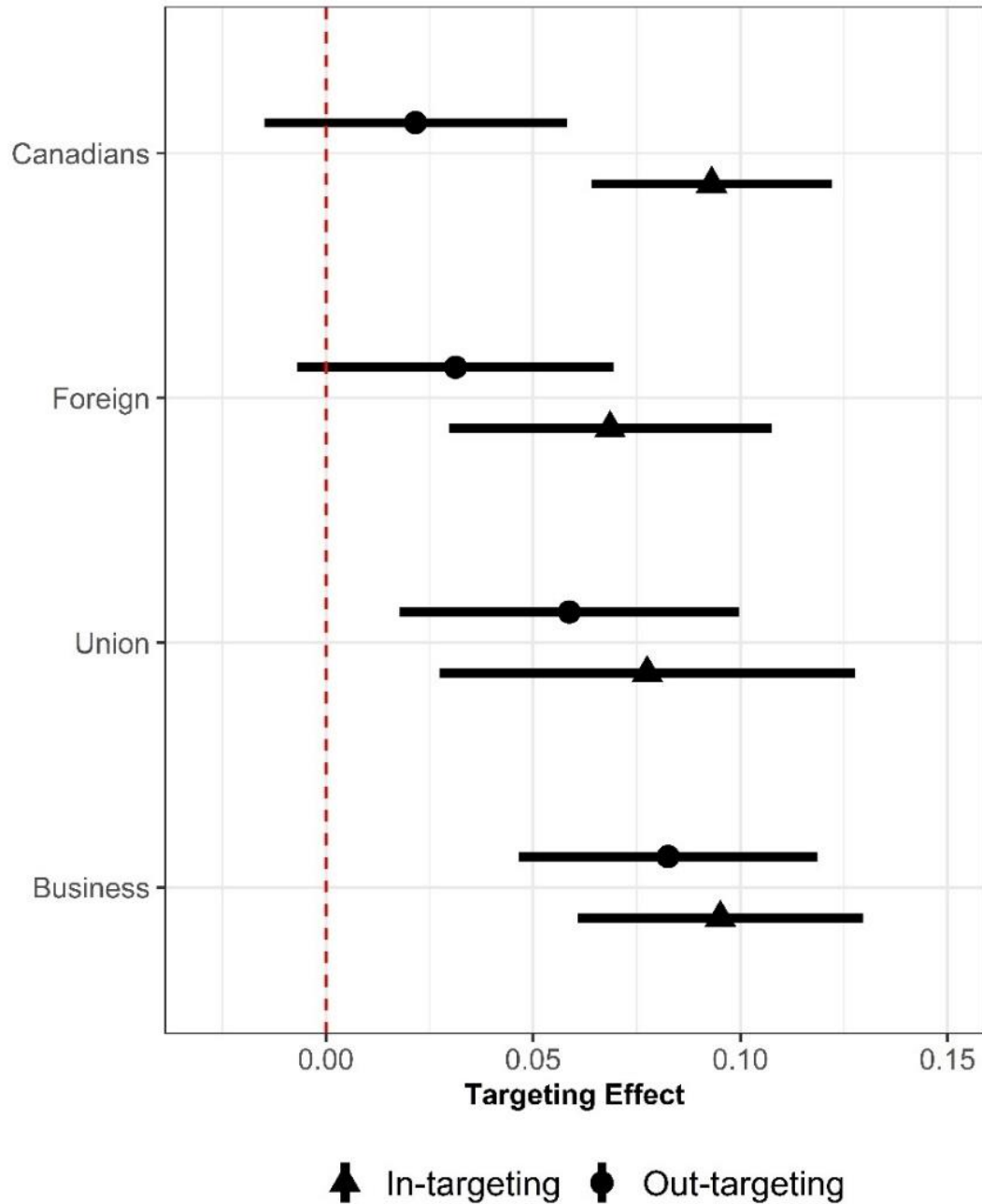
One of the main extensions of the TMP relative to the Branding and GSMP models is how the model considers group ties interacted with partisan attachments. Previous studies neither considered group ties nor tested assumptions with multiple group cleavages. I examine whether these groups create heterogeneity in the targeted appeals' effects. Some groups have stronger ties with a single party, while others have weaker ones. For example, more respondents associated business owners with the Conservative Party (66%) than foreign workers with the Liberal Party (44%). Among all treatment groups, the business owners in broad appeals are associated with lower expressive partisanship ($n = 157$, $\bar{X} =$

0.496, s.e. = 0.013), followed by foreign workers ($n = 150$, $\bar{X} = 0.504$, s.e. = 0.013) and union workers ($n = 103$, $\bar{X} = 0.506$, s.e. = 0.014). For the in-targeting treatment, there is a high average treatment effect among business owners ($n = 96$, $\bar{X} = 0.646$, s.e. = 0.016), Canadians ($n = 150$, $\bar{X} = 0.632$, s.e. = 0.012), and foreign workers ($n = 66$, $\bar{X} = 0.616$, s.e. = 0.018). In the out-targeting scenario, the highest average is for treatments that mentioned unionized workers ($n = 68$, $\bar{X} = 0.601$, s.e. = 0.019), followed by business owners ($n = 80$, $\bar{X} = 0.597$, s.e. = 0.015) and foreign workers ($n = 68$, $\bar{X} = 0.568$, s.e. = 0.017). Averaging across all groups, in-targeting perceptions have a higher average expressive partisanship than the other two types of appeals.

Figure 4.4 displays the treatment effect by targeted cleavage (i.e., business owners, union workers, foreign workers, Canadians). Across cleavages, in-targeting consistently has a positive impact relative to broad appeals ($p < 0.01$). Being exposed to in-targeting of business owners increases expressive attachments significantly compared to perceiving this cleavage without holding an association ($\beta = 0.1$; $p < 0.001$; 95% CI: [0.06 to 0.13]). Nevertheless, the effects of out-targeted appeals seem less consistently different from broad appeals across group cleavages. For those with less frequent associations (i.e., foreign workers and Canadians), the effects of out-targeting do not differ from broad appeals. Conversely, groups with stronger associations with a single party in the sample have a significant impact compared to broad appeals. Participants exposed to out-targeted appeals regarding union workers ($\beta = 0.06$; $p < 0.01$; 95% CI: [0.02 to 0.10]) and business owners ($\beta = 0.08$; $p < 0.001$; 95% CI: [0.05 to 0.12]) have significant effects compared to broad appeals. Unlike the in-targeting treatment, these results suggest that out-targeting effects

are more complex and depend upon identifying the cleavage as a clear and close supporter of the competitor party.

Figure 4.4: Targeting Effect by Group Appeal



Notes: The results show the level of expressive partisanship, estimated by the interaction between targeting and group presented in the vignette, in an OLS model that controls for party identification, age, gender, education, union status, birthplace in Canada and political involvement (holding these variables at their mean values). The confidence interval (CI) is calculated using the 95% confidence level.

4.3.2. The effect of targeted appeals on behaviour through partisanship

To what extent do partisan attachments connect elite appeals to polarization, reasoning, and voting loyalties? Previous models often relate partisanship to these behavioural outcomes. For example, the Branding Model suggests that partisanship mediates the effects of relative policy agendas on voting loyalties. As previously discussed, a growing body of research relates group appeals to decision-making processes (e.g., Huber, Meyer & Wagner, 2024). The model proposes that elite strategies (i.e., targeted appeals) have direct and indirect effects, through partisan attachments, on behaviour outcomes. Those identified with the party are more attuned to group cues and have better knowledge of group-party associations, which helps them to understand the party's strategies better insofar as who is a prototypical partisan member. Hence, I examine partisan attachments (expressive and instrumental partisanship) as factors through which elite rhetoric influences voters' behaviour.

Unlike previous models of partisanship, one assumption of the TMP is that expressive and instrumental attachments are interdependent. Although instrumental partisanship may influence expressive attachments, a large body of work suggests that instrumental attachments may actually follow expressive partisanship (e.g., Dancey & Goren, 2010; Dias & Lelkes, 2021). Adopting this assumption, I use the path-specific estimation from Zhou and Yamamoto (2023) in the multi-mediator scenario. The PSE approach detects each mediator's strength as a causal path for the outcomes. The advantage of using PSE in this dissertation is that this method does not assume independence between these attachment mediators. For each outcome, it decomposes the total effect of in-targeting (1 for in-targeting and 0, otherwise) into three causal paths: i) direct effects (In-targeting

→ Y_j) refers to the effect of in-targeting on the outcome; ii) effect through expressive and instrumental partisanship (In-targeting → Attachments $\rightsquigarrow Y_j$), whose estimate reflects the role of expressive and instrumental attachments, in this order, in transmitting the in-targeting effects; and iii) effects through only instrumental partisanship (A → Instrumental PID $\rightsquigarrow Y_j$), whose estimate reflects the contribution of instrumental partisanship to the effect of group appeals.

The following analysis focuses on the three causal paths, focusing on when partisan attachments impact the outcomes of party appeals. Except for in-party voting, I ran OLS models on affective polarization (H4.2) and motivated reasoning (H4.3), comparing in-targeting with both out-targeting and broad appeals.⁵² I ran a logit model for in-party voting (H4.4), as the dependent variable is dichotomous. Table 4.3 presents the results of the PSE decomposition of effects. Recall that I hypothesized a positive causal mediation effect of in-targeting on affective polarization through partisan attachments, and possibly a remaining average direct effect as well. The results confirm my expectations. The estimated PSE through partisan attachments is 0.030 ($p < 0.001$), which is significant and 3 percentage points larger than the mediator for instrumental attachment alone ($p = 0.95$). The direct effect of in-targeting is also significant ($p < 0.05$), but smaller than the pathway through partisan attachments. This result suggests that partisanship is the primary mechanism of elite appeals influencing affective polarization.

For the Motivated Reasoning Hypothesis (H4.3), I hypothesized that targeted appeals could affect motivated (directional) reasoning through expressive partisanship. The

⁵² Alternatively, I ran the same analysis excluding participants that perceived a broad appeal treatment and find similar results.

result does not confirm the hypothesis. The impact of elite appeals is only significant through expressive partisanship ($p < 0.05$), increasing motivated reasoning by 3.4 percentage points, while the other pathways do not reach statistical significance. These findings suggest that expressive partisanship is likely a meaningful mechanism that fuels directional reasoning, despite the insignificant direct effect of targeted appeals.

Turning to in-party voting, in-targeting appeals are expected to enhance the likelihood of in-party voting through attachments and also through a direct effect of targeted appeals. The results confirm the Voting Loyalty Hypothesis (H4.4). The primary mediator is partisan attachments, which increase the likelihood of in-party voting by 5.4 percentage points ($p < 0.001$). Once again, instrumental partisanship alone does not reach statistical significance for this causal mediation. In-targeting significantly influences the probability of in-party voting with an 8.8 percentage point difference ($p < 0.001$). The most significant effect on voting is from the direct effect of in-targeting relative to out-targeting and broad appeals. As predicted in the Branding Model, the decline of partisan identity is insufficient to explain changes in voting decisions.

Table 4.3: Estimates of Total and PSEs of Targeting on Behavioural Outcomes

	Estimate
Affective polarization (Y_1)	
Total effect (TE)	0.048 [0.030; 0.067] ***
Through expressive partisanship ($A \rightarrow M_1 \rightsquigarrow Y_1$)	0.030 [0.023; 0.038] ***
Through instrumental partisanship ($A \rightarrow M_2 \rightsquigarrow Y_1$)	0.000 [-0.007; 0.007]
Direct effect ($A \rightarrow Y_1$)	0.018 [0.001; 0.035] *
Motivated reasoning (Y_2)	
Total effect (TE)	0.066 [-0.026; 0.154]
Through expressive partisanship ($A \rightarrow M_1 \rightsquigarrow Y_2$)	0.034 [0.003; 0.070] *
Through instrumental partisanship ($A \rightarrow M_2 \rightsquigarrow Y_2$)	0.013 [-0.022; 0.045]
Direct effect ($A \rightarrow Y_2$)	0.019 [-0.081; 0.112]
In-party voting (Y_3)	
Total effect (TE)	0.126 [0.082; 0.176] ***
Through expressive partisanship ($A \rightarrow M_1 \rightsquigarrow Y_3$)	0.054 [0.035; 0.074] ***
Through instrumental partisanship ($A \rightarrow M_2 \rightsquigarrow Y_3$)	-0.016 [-0.043; 0.006]
Direct effect ($A \rightarrow Y_3$)	0.088 [0.038; 0.148] ***

p: * < .05, ** < .01, *** < .001. Notes: These results were calculated using the 'paths' package in R (Zhou & Yamamoto, 2023). The results show the average total effect estimated by OLS, controlling for party identification, age, gender, education, union status, birthplace in Canada, and political involvement. In brackets, 95% bootstrapped confidence intervals are represented (based on 1,000 iterations).

Since partisan attachments have been established as mechanisms for at least two outcomes tested here, a subsequent concern is to what extent these results substantively account for unmeasured confounders (U). Random assignments partially prevent confounders from influencing the relationship between manipulation (A) and mediators,

but not estimations from the mediator to the outcome (Bullock, Green, & Ha, 2010). A sensitivity analysis enables the examination of whether the PSE is sensitive to confoundedness.⁵³ The most substantial result is the effect of in-targeting on polarization through partisan attachments. Hence, I focus on the negative relationship between the parameters of different values of the confounder effects on affective polarization and the conditional distribution between in-targeting and other treatments. Figure 4.5 illustrates the contours of bias-adjusted estimates. Since the PSE estimator is positive, the result for the mediator is potentially underestimated. The effect of in-targeting on polarization through attachments might be larger, which suggests that the findings for affective polarization are robust.⁵⁴

One caveat about the sensitivity analysis of causal mediation analysis is that there are no objective criteria to guide when the relationship is sensitive to confoundedness. A feasible possibility is to include covariates already observed. As long as the unmeasured confounders need to be more extreme than the covariates, this suggests that these confounders are rare (Hu, 2025, p. 96). Based on the literature of partisan identity and affective polarization, two confounders are included in the sensitivity analysis. First, political involvement reflects whether politics are a central part of a participant's life. (Krupnikov & Ryan, 2022).⁵⁵ Those deeply involved in politics tend to develop more animosity toward opposing party members, and they exhibit intense attachments to the in-party (Huddy et al., 2015). The second observed covariate is group affect. In the GSMP

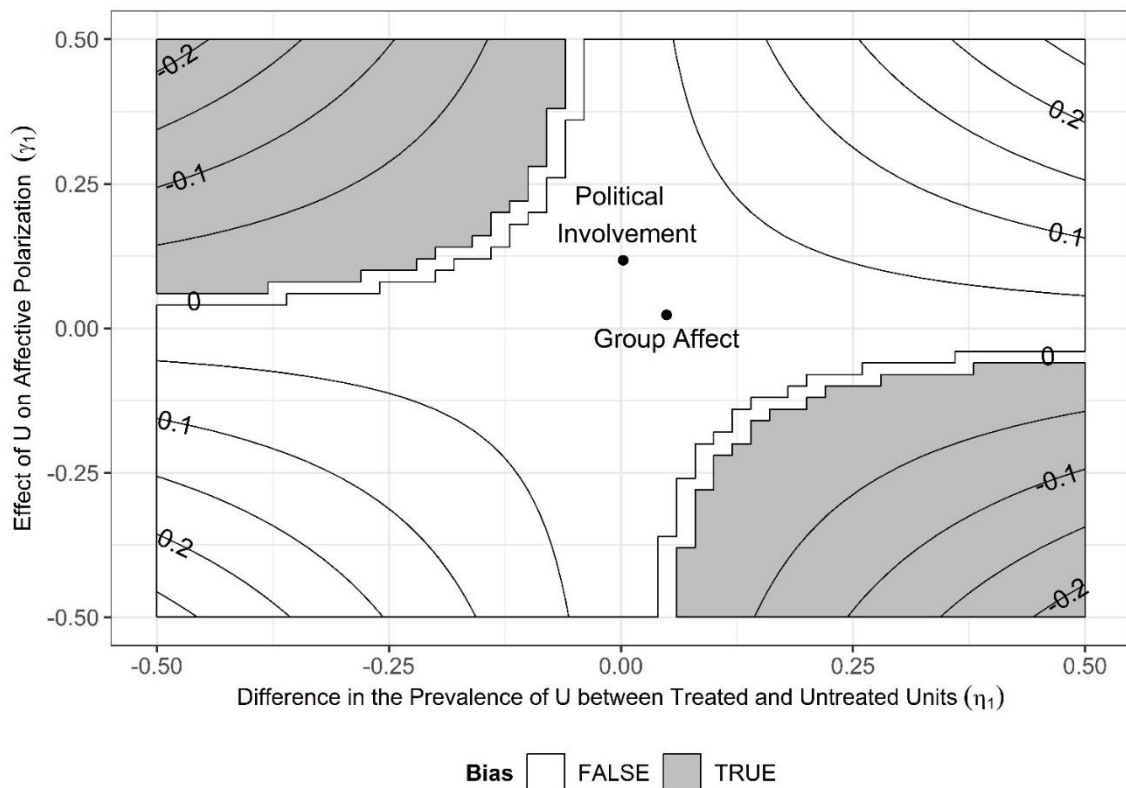
⁵³ It calculates bias-adjusted estimates from the plausible values of the effect of these confounders on the outcomes, as well as the conditional distribution of confounders between treated and untreated conditions.

⁵⁴ In [Appendix 15](#), I present the sensitivity analyses for motivated reasoning and in-party voting.

⁵⁵ To date, this is the first time the Political Involvement Scale has been used in Canada. A positive and strong correlation exists between political involvement and expressive partisanship ($r = 0.52$), as expected. In [Appendix 12](#), Table L3 displays how this is measured.

model, group affect predicts partisan attachment. A recent study has indicated that group affect is central to explaining the effectiveness of appeals on polarization (Huber, Meyer, & Wagner, 2021). For the following analysis, I coded political involvement and group affect as binaries around their median values.

Figure 4.5: Bias-adjusted Estimates on Polarization through Partisanship



Notes: Based on Zhou and Yamamoto (2023), the contours represent the bias-adjusted estimates of the effect through partisanship plotted as a function of $-\gamma_1\eta_1$ parameters. The grey area shows the values of γ_1 and η_1 that would reverse the sign of the $A \rightarrow M_1 \rightsquigarrow Y_1$. The parameters γ_1 and η_1 were allowed to vary from -0.5 to 0.5 with a step size of 0.01. The annotated points represent the γ_1 and η_1 values that would result if the unobserved variables U “worked exactly like” one of the observed covariates in terms of their confounding effect on the mediator-outcome relationship. They help to sense how extreme the values of confounders would need to be to reverse the sign of the mediator effect.

As Figure 4.5 shows, the estimates for the two covariates are far less extreme than the unobserved confounder area. This is evidence that a confounder has to be extreme to shift the substantive conclusion. For the estimator to be considered completely biased, and

have the substantive conclusion overturned, an unobserved confounder should have an extreme negative effect on affective polarization and a substantial presence in the in-targeting treatment rather than out-targeting or broad appeals. Meanwhile, the conclusion that expressive attachment is a primary mechanism through which elite appeals influence affective polarization is quite robust. Therefore, the original estimate for the effect through partisanship is 0.030, which is robust as its covariates are outside the shaded area of the graph.

4.4. Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter was designed to investigate under which conditions partisans can be more divided across parties, motivated by parties, and loyal to their party. Despite extensive research, the mechanisms behind partisan attachments and their consequences remain unclear. Since Social Identity Theory was first used to identify partisanship as a central factor explaining behaviour, expressive partisanship has received more attention in political science. In this dissertation, I propose the TMP, which emphasizes expressive and instrumental attachments as mediators from elite messages to behavioural outcomes. I conducted a survey experiment in which I manipulated appeals to four different groups with distinct perceptions of prior association with the main Canadian parties. I find that prior associations matter for partisan attachments. Expressive attachments increase when in-targeting occurs, that is, when a party targets specific groups that have longstanding connections to the party. In turn, partisan attachments transmitted the effects of elite appeals to affective polarization and a significant part of the effects to in-party voting. Hence, partisans have become more divided and loyal because party strategy with core supporters

boosts attachments among partisan voters, rather than expanding constituencies or addressing broad appeals.

The TMP model contributes to the current literature on elite strategies and partisan attachments. First, it provides empirical support for the strategic approach of group appeals, in which the informative value of appeals is conditioned by prior associations between group and party. Elite strategies can still make predispositions salient, for example, informing voters about group affinities. Moreover, a party communication strategy to appeal to a specific group can prime these predispositions since it targets well-known groups which are products of longstanding association with the party (e.g., Tesler, 2015). Second, the current chapter shows the total effects of party appeals on voting (Thau, 2021) and polarization (Robison et al., 2021; Huber, Meyer, & Wagner, 2024). The indirect effects of decomposing the targeting effects through partisan attachments are more substantive than the direct effects on affective polarization. Third, the TMP proposes that political parties play an integral role in the foundations of partisan attachments. The Branding Model emphasizes the effects of expanding policy positions toward the opposition agenda and away from the party image on the decline of partisanship and voting (Lupu, 2013; 2016). By comparison, my model differentiates in-targeting, out-targeting, and broad appeals regarding the influence on partisanship. Beyond the individual motivations, it can explain the nuances of partisanship across countries, as well as among partisan groups. At least for partisan attachments, the TMP finally challenges the rational idea that broad appeals benefit parties more than pandering to a segment of the electorate (e.g., Hersh & Schaffner, 2013; Somer-Topcu, 2015). Aligned with the traditional group approach in partisan identity, broad

appeals contributed to the lowest levels of partisan attachments relative to in- or out-targeting.

These findings have important implications for normative concerns about democratic governance. As long as group cues enhance convergence and stability in voting decisions (Levendusky, 2009), evidence suggests that reinforcing expressive attachments enhances cheerleading and loathing toward opposition members (e.g., Iyengar et al., 2019). With partisan stereotypes limiting the information value of group cues, group appeals might help voters to follow partisanship instead of their preferences. In-targeting seems to prompt partisans to assume a more “prototypical” role. The fact that partisans reward in-targeting with more expressive attachments, rather than incorporating new cleavages, indicates that identity politics are strong and that preserving the boundaries of belonging as well as a sense of differentiation are fundamental. Unfortunately, this trend indicates undesirable outcomes for democratic pluralism (Dahl, 1961).

A few questions persist, however. Although the groups sampled were more extensive than previous studies, the current chapter does not cover the full range of group-party associations. This design avoids odd combinations of parties that never appeal to a specific group. For example, it omitted an NDP appeal to business owners. Using topic sampling (Clifford & Rainey, 2024), a design with an extended list of groups could reveal the dynamics of partisanship across different associations and group attributes (e.g., salience) that might be strongly associated with partisan identities. This chapter also focused only on intra-party messages. Partisans often consume news about their party, but also about the other parties; strategies might also influence perceptions about partisan identity among the out-party (Kane, Mason & Wronski, 2021). That being said, a design

for a second study that makes cross-targeting possible would benefit from exploring the extension of targeting effects. Finally, this design manipulates groups in targeted appeals. It neither has a clear control condition nor manipulates prior associations. In the next step, a third study could include prior group-party connections and a ‘no appeal’ condition, including group affect questions before the manipulation to distinguish the effect of affinities in expressive partisanship.

In short, future research should explore the nuances of the TMP. Although group affinities and prior associations likely correlate, there is a debate on whether partisans can identify the party’s coalition or if it is biased (Ahler & Sood, 2018; Orr & Hurber, 2021). The TMP must consider both mechanisms, manipulating controversial groups that conflict with affinities and associations. Another important contribution that requires more investigation is about broad appeals. In the current model, broad appeal treatments had the lowest level of expressive attachments, rather than appeals to opposing groups. Therefore, it suggests a scenario of brand dilution related to broadening appeals rather than aligning with the out-party. Finally, I included “Canadians” as the broadest appeal group sampled, but it was identified as an in-group and an out-group by a few respondents. Besides adding a “no appeal” condition, future research should be dedicated to investigating whether appeals for “the nation” or “the people” effectively broaden a party’s appeal. This chapter is relevant in Canada due to the plural and distinct perceptions of “Canadians” across Québec and First Nations territories.

The TMP implies that elites with group cues can shape partisanship and impact outcomes in polarization and voting loyalties. Together with the growing literature on group-based appeals, these findings should encourage experts to consider partisanship

beyond personal characteristics and as a strategic asset during campaigns. In difficult times, parties can rely on core supporters and boost partisanship to protect these votes from bad performances or unfavourable events. On the other hand, expanding constituencies has a cost regarding partisan loyalties, cautioning against such a strategy for the long-term benefits of partisanship. A problem is that in-targeting can generate undesirable and adverse outcomes for democratic governance. However, as parties can manage their partisanship through appeal strategies, the TMP offers a more optimistic perspective at the end of the day. Experts can figure out institutional designs that encourage cross-partisan appeals, maintaining levels of partisan engagement with accountability. Some designs favour social sorting, where parties reinforce group associations and strengthen expressive partisanship indefinitely. The ideal would be a competitive system that requires parties to switch and broaden their appeals to new constituencies to leverage support.

5. Conclusions: Political Parties, Partisanship, and Democracy

In contemporary times, citizens seem to be more divided and personally invested in politics than ever before. Affective polarization, motivated reasoning, and in-party voting are all symptomatic of an emotional and personal politics that has raised concerns for experts everywhere. This dissertation seeks to help make it possible to understand why this has happened by explaining the origins and consequences of partisanship. Using the popular division between instrumental (i.e., running tally of performances and assessments) and expressive (i.e., sense of belonging and differentiation) partisan attachments, I develop a new model of partisanship that explains the levels of personal attachment to a party and considers both types of partisan attachment as mediators for behavioural outcomes in contemporary democracies. In my Targeted Model of Partisanship, parties are pivotal in boosting expressive partisanship among their supporters. Focusing on parties' capacity to collect personal information and appeal directly to voters' predispositions, I theorize how targeted appeals shape partisanship by informing group ties and priming partisan identity. Further, based on matching messages with prior group-party associations, I classify party appeals as either in-targeting, out-targeting, or broad. This enables the identification of situations in which party appeals lead to those outcomes facilitated by increased partisanship. Accurate targeted appeals have the potential to impact politics through expressive partisanship, making it more personal and emotional.

This dissertation draws on two representative samples of Canadian voters ($N = 37,822$ in 2019 and $N = 20,968$ in 2021), panel data of British partisanship and perceptions of appeals (collected from 2021 to 2024), and an original survey experiment with targeted

appeals involving several groups and Canadian parties. These two country contexts offer an excellent opportunity to explore partisanship across differences in distinct party strategies. On the one hand, Canadian parties have deployed strategies to address a variety of group interests across regions (Clarke et al., 2019). The brokerage strategy, for example, includes in-targeting and out-targeting appeals. British parties, on the other hand, left class ties behind in favour of broad appeals (Evans & Tilley, 2017; Grant & Evans, 2024). Recent studies, however, suggest partisan voters are becoming deeply divided and emotionally attached to politics and established parties (e.g., Hobolt et al., 2021; Johnston, 2023; Lachance & Beauvais, 2024). From the observational to experimental evidence, this project reveals that perceptions of parties' behaviour shape partisanship and influence polarization, reasoning and voting. Thus, this dissertation contributes to agendas on political behaviour and comparative politics by connecting partisanship and parties for the first time with targeting, emphasizing the role parties can play in expressive partisanship and behaviour outcomes.

After reviewing the parameters of the Targeting Model of Partisanship, I conclude by discussing the contributions that this model, along with my dissertation research, make to the overall literature in political behaviour and comparative politics. This model is intended to bridge two traditional fields by emphasizing the party's role in people's partisan reasoning and behaviour outcomes. In addition, I discuss the implications of the model for the study of partisanship, framing the results in normative debate about civic competence and democratic engagement. Finally, I consider limitations and discuss future research projects that derive from this dissertation.

5.1. The Targeting Model Revisited

The heart of this dissertation is the Targeting Model of Partisanship (TMP), which aims to explain behaviour outcomes (i.e., affective polarization, motivated reasoning, and voting) through the current state of partisan attachments. Rather than contrast, this model combines an empirical investigation of both instrumental and expressive partisanship to understand why politics has become more emotional and personal. Considering these two types of partisanship in combination predicts distinctive levels of polarization, wishful thinking, and the likelihood of in-party voting (see Chapter 2). The distribution of partisanship combinations changes when elite behaviour (de)aligns with policy or social expectations. For instance, a party that moderates positions or cross-pressures the social coalition in subsequent elections alters the probability of expressive and instrumental attachments. By comparison, emphasizing ideological purity and reinforcing group ties enhances these attachments. Therefore, elite behaviour plays a significant role in the prevalence of partisan attachments and, consequently, the behavioural outcomes that demonstrate politics is more personal.

Considering this dynamic between parties and partisans, the TMP offers a less explored perspective of partisanship in behavioural models (for an exception, see Lupu, 2016). Parties are an important source of information about policy positions and group affiliations (Bullock, 2011). In addition, they can also reinforce loyalties and motivated reasoning in public opinion (Leeper & Slothuus, 2014). In this vein, current literature has revealed that partisanship affects perceptions of party behaviour and coalitions (Ahler & Sood, 2018), but also policy and social alignments that influence partisanship (Mason & Wronski, 2018). The TMP argues that appeals to traditional group ties lead to more

expressive partisanship among partisan supporters (see Chapter 3). In contrast, expressive partisanship declines when parties emphasize new constituencies or align with competitors' social coalitions. Beyond the consequences for voting choices, the influence on partisanship represents a different kind of support: stable and engaged support for the party. Boosted by in-targeting, expressive partisanship predicts perceptions of ingroup appeals from the favourite party. This provides a persistent effect of partisan support. In addition to the total effect of party appeals on voting, then, there is a significant indirect effect on partisan attachments and other behavioural outcomes.

Group-party associations within targeted appeals shape partisanship. The TMP model highlights targeted appeals in modern campaigns, when social media and data collections enable parties to speak closely to individual voters and group ties. Targeted appeals can accurately match voters' predispositions, personalizing messages and emphasizing policy agreements and group affiliations (Hersh & Schaffner, 2013; Holman et al., 2015; Huber et al., 2024). The effectiveness of targeted appeals in the TMP model depends upon prior associations to determine whether and how they shape partisanship. In-targeting refers to matching the message and partisan predisposition by appealing to traditional allies. These groups have a longstanding connection with the party that stems from early socialization or is a product of well-known party behaviour. As a consequence of such matching, these appeals prime partisan identity, boosting expressive partisanship and influencing subsequent behaviour (see Chapter 4). The TMP also specifies when there is a mismatch or non-match in targeted appeals. Out-targeting represents a mismatch between the message and partisan predisposition. By appealing to oppositional groups, the absence of in-group cues and lack of differentiation likely diminishes expressive

partisanship. Out-targeting can be helpful in specific moments in which the party aims to expand support beyond traditional groups. However, it can also result in less loyalty and commitment to the party. Broad appeals refer to the lack of association between the party and a group, serving to inform voters about the group affiliation. They are the baseline of this model, being compared with targeted appeals.

The total effect of targeted appeals includes the direct impact on behavioural outcomes, such as polarization (Huber et al., 2024), and the indirect impact through partisanship. Currently, parties have the capacity to send targeted appeals that address partisan alignments, inform voters about group-party associations, and prime partisan identity, which reflects more personal and emotional politics. The TMP model emphasizes three outcomes that share the influence of targeting and partisanship, which previous research has never connected in a single model. First, affective polarization refers to the distance between in-party favouritism and dislike of the out-party (Iyengar et al., 2019). Through targeted appeals, parties can (de)emphasize distances between partisan groups. If expressive partisanship increases, this distance becomes an emotional feature. Despite the risk of backfiring in overall public opinion (e.g., Haffert et al., 2024), targeted partisans may compensate by increasing hostility towards the out-party (Groenendyk, 2013). Second, motivated reasoning reflects the directional processing of information that aims to reach a specific conclusion (Kunda, 1990). When targeted, partisan supporters are less inclined to search for diverse information and confirm their prior beliefs (Leeper & Slothuus, 2014). If expressive partisanship increases motivated reasoning, such information processing aligns with partisan identity. Third, in-party voting has been associated with expressive partisanship (Bankert et al., 2017; Huddy et al., 2018) as well as group-based voting with

targeted appeals (Thau, 2021; Robison et al., 2021). The likelihood of in-party voting increases when targeted appeals align with group-party association. All these outcomes can contribute to the sense that politics is more personal and emotional than in the past.

5.2. Contributions of the Dissertation

This dissertation offers empirical contributions to the study of partisanship, political parties, and targeting agendas. First, I investigate the foundations of partisanship and the consequences of instrumental and expressive partisanship in public behaviour. I empirically demonstrate that these two perspectives of partisanship are interconnected, responding to changes in elite behaviour in their dynamics. Their joint categorization predicts distinct behavioural outcomes that help explain when politics becomes more personal and expressive with normative consequences for democracy. Second, this project emphasizes the role of parties in boosting partisanship. From a perspective of expressive partisanship associated with social identities, traditional group ties matter for the efficacy of the party's influence on partisanship and subsequent behaviour. Third, this dissertation shows that targeted appeals that match group-party associations explain the increase in expressive partisanship, thereby enhancing polarization and in-party voting. The effect of targeted appeals relies on perceptions of prior associations, so parties can contribute to partisanship when they prime partisan identity through traditional support, but less so when they expand their appeals to include broader groups in their coalition.

Specifically, this project provides more detailed insights into how elite behaviour can influence attachments and personal outcomes by combining instrumental and expressive partisanship measurements. This novel contribution in Chapter 1 predicts the

influence of elite behaviour according to the joint combination of partisanship. Exploring the Expressive Partisanship Battery with representative samples of Canadian voters, I find that perceptions of moderation and cross-pressures—a conflict involving multiple, competing identities—significantly decrease the likelihood of partisans simultaneously holding higher levels of both instrumental and expressive partisanship. In addition, the datasets I use enable this project to explore how partisanship changes when a party changes its strategy. Between 2019 and 2021, the Conservative Party of Canada shifted its position on critical issues (e.g., abortion and the environment). Despite similar electoral performance between these two elections, partisans became less (instrumentally and expressively) attached to the party when they disagreed with the environmentalist views that the party adopted in 2021. Therefore, this chapter’s findings reveal that the instrumental and expressive components of partisanship react to party behaviour, even if electoral performance remains the same.

Chapter 2 reveals the effect of appeals on partisanship and whether perceptions of appeals also precede the level of partisan identity. In this chapter, I investigate British panel data to examine how expressive partisanship is affected by party strategies involving class cleavages. The British major parties (i.e., Labour and Conservative) have longstanding associations with class cleavages, yet they both undertook shifts in electoral strategy after the 2019 Brexit elections. Previous partisan associations predicted perceptions of class appeals, such that appeals toward the working class influenced expressive partisanship in both parties, but in different ways. My analyses suggest that appeals to the in-party class (i.e., Labour Party and working-class appeals) increase expressive partisanship, while appeals to the out-party class (i.e., Conservative Party and working-class appeals) decrease

partisanship. Examining perceptions of appeals among those who perceive convergence between appeals to the middle and working classes, such as brand dilution (Lupu, 2016), I find that this convergence diminishes expressive partisanship. British partisans increase support for their party as long as it appeals to the class that already belongs to the party's image. Furthermore, perceptions of indistinct appeals decrease partisan affiliation.

The TMP model ultimately demonstrates that targeted appeals rely on prior associations to influence expressive partisanship. Drawing from classic and current models of partisanship (e.g., Lupu, 2013; 2016; Kane et al., 2021), the TMP considers the direction of the effect of appeals – in-targeting, out-targeting and broad - on partisanship. Chapter 3 makes use of an experimental design, in which participants were exposed to appeals from their party referencing either economic cleavages (i.e., workers and business owners), foreign workers or Canadians. It was hypothesized that in-targeting intensifies expressive partisanship relative to broad appeals, and Chapter 3 confirms this. Surprisingly, the results suggest that out-targeting also strengthens expressive partisanship, but not to a greater extent than in-targeting. Ultimately, this chapter aims to connect in-targeting to behavioural outcomes that suggest deeper divisions and personal connections in politics today. Testing for multi-mediation effects, in-targeting enhances affective polarization and in-party voting through partisanship. Thus, partisanship is a worthwhile consideration for understanding why contemporary politics has become more emotional than it was in the past.

5.3. Implications of the Model of Partisanship

Partisanship and its consequences on behavioural outcomes reflect a normative concern about civic competence and democratic governance in contemporary politics. In cases

demonstrated in this project, party behaviour is directly associated with voters' lack of capacity to deal with politics, which involves partisan reasoning and its implications for information processing, and the capacity of the elite to produce outcomes consistent with public preferences. Through technological developments, social media and data collections allow parties to accurately target appeals that match people's predispositions, which enhances expressive partisanship among partisan voters. As it increases personal attachments, in-targeting decreases voters' deliberation, deepens divisions and leads to a less pluralistic representation. The good news, however, is that parties play a pivotal role in partisanship, which suggests that institutional designs might help to decrease the side effects of elite behaviour on partisan attachments.

Combining different types of partisanship enriches the discussion of the normative aspects of partisanship in terms of civic competence. The joint categorization demonstrates that the foundations of each partisanship alone have little to say about information processing among partisan voters. This dissertation reveals that a joint categorization between instrumental and expressive partisanship predicts different values of motivated reasoning than expressive partisanship alone. Since instrumental partisanship should be the most rational attachment to a party, it is surprising that it also affects motivated reasoning. Attitudinal attachments (high instrumental with low expressive attachment) reflect accountability and deliberation as desirable outcomes in the normative perspective. However, univalent attachments (high instrumental and high expressive) combine policy preferences, but with high levels of partisan-motivated reasoning and affective polarization. High instrumental factors do not automatically translate into desirable outcomes (Arceneaux & Vander Wielen, 2017). The extent to which instrumental partisanship is

democratically desirable depends on the types of preferences associated with such an attachment. Likewise, expressive partisanship, which conditions most behavioural outcomes that decrease civic competence, can be associated with participation and political involvement (Huddy et al., 2015). Its association with instrumental partisanship enhances these outcomes necessary for a healthy democratic system.

In evaluating the impact of targeted appeals on partisanship, this dissertation highlights the fundamental role parties can play in democratic governance. The normative concern about targeted appeals rests on the interpretation of these appeals. One aspect of democratic theories is that citizens are well-informed to make their best decisions. Thus, targeted appeals would be more effective in helping citizens form preferences. However, empirical evidence suggests that elite cues can reinforce partisan divisions and cheerleading (Bolsen, Druckman, & Cook, 2014). If these appeals work as cues, they can at least inform citizens about parties' stances on public policy and group affiliations (Bullock, 2011). Aware of such group affiliation, citizens can connect party support based on group affinities (Kane, Mason, and Wronski, 2021). Furthermore, targeted appeals provide transparency of political representation, as citizens will know which party is associated with which group. Aligning with partisan stereotypes, partisans can make sense of politics and evaluate performance in light of the stereotypes they possess about the party, such as prior associations (Rahn, 1993). Rather than representing preferences, targeted appeals set these partisan affiliations and preferences. This threatens democratic governance, as it diminishes responsiveness and deepens divisions. In this sense, if parties play a role in the intensity of partisanship and its related outcomes, the extent to which partisanship reflects individual

preferences is limited. Instead, partisanship may reflect the party that speaks closely to partisan predispositions in the sense of tribalism.

This dissertation shows that public perceptions replicate elite behaviour as long as appeals shape partisan attachments. The relationship between targeted appeals and partisanship reveals only a small part of whether parties accurately represent group identities. Concerning mass polarization (Iyengar et al., 2012; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015), if the party's appeals lead to social sorting around the partisan identity, the consequence is the potential exacerbation of favouritism toward the in-party while fostering rejection of the out-party, as observed in multiple contexts (Hobolt et al., 2021; Johnston, 2023). In the Group Sentiment Model of Partisanship, it is impossible to disassociate unfavourable views about groups from partisanship. When such sentiments are shaped by partisan affiliation (i.e., outgroup animosity), rather than sentiments that shape partisanship, this demonstrates a lack of citizen autonomy and inevitably leads to polarized tribalism (i.e., Iyengar and Westwood, 2015). In contrast, it would be better if prior group-party associations shaped partisanship, as this would demonstrate the cultural (cleavages) aspect, but recognize the political nature of partisanship (Ruckelshaus, 2022). Prior group-party association reflect the fundamental roles of political parties in mediating social cleavages, formal politics, and political conflicts (Rosenblum, 2008). When the group is evaluated in terms of the association with each party, people assess the political membership of a group, rather than their sentiments about the group itself. However, more work should be done to disentangle these two factors and determine in which context partisans judge based on sentiments or prior associations.

5.4. Limitations

Although this dissertation contributes theoretically and empirically to several research agendas with implications for democratic theory, some drawbacks persist. From the TMP, this dissertation is unable to say what the effect of targeted appeals is on non-partisan voters. For instance, it is beyond this dissertation's scope to investigate whether targeted appeals affect non-partisans' reasoning, including backlash against partisan groups and parties. The TMP model also cannot indicate whether voters become identifiers from targeted appeals. My central argument emphasizes how prior associations in targeted appeals impact partisans and, as a result, their behaviour. It speaks to partisans becoming more or less expressive or instrumental when political parties prime partisan identity. Nevertheless, the partisan population limits the generalizability of the TMP model to the entire electorate.

Another limitation applies to broad appeals when developing the TMP model as the baseline for in- and out-targeting appeals. Again, this limitation is not unique to this dissertation, reflecting an empirical debate about the appropriate comparison to estimate the efficacy of targeting appeals (Petty et al., 2025). In this project, I defined broad appeals as the 'non-match' between group ties and partisan perceptions. Broad appeals can be any message in which the target is not associated with any party. However, it does not work precisely as a pure baseline for targeted appeals experiments—for example, the experimental design assigned participants to targeted appeals without a 'no appeal' condition. The findings cannot state the absolute effect of targeted appeals on partisanship, but the differences across appeals by group ties directly speak to my central argument. Chapter 3 tried to establish a baseline by specifying Canadians as a "broad" appeal, but

surprisingly participants identified the group as associated with a party. In fact, the associations with Canadian identity, both outside and inside Québec, partially explains why the Liberal Party is successful, and likely accounts for the associations (see Johnston, 2017). An experimental design without a control condition is not ideal, but it is sufficient since this chapter aims to test the relative effect of prior associations. A complete experiment would require ‘non-match’ and ‘no targeting’ conditions to fully determine the efficacy of appeals on expressive partisanship.

Another empirical limitation refers to the inconsistency of instrumental partisanship measurement compared to expressive partisanship across different samples and empirical designs employed in this dissertation. Following previous studies (Bankert, 2024), I combined policy positions, ideological intensity, and leaders’ performances into a single score for instrumental attachment. Instrumental partisanship lacks a precise measurement that captures this attachment based on a rational perspective of policy performances matching with personal interests and views. By comparison, this dissertation utilizes an eight-item battery for expressive partisanship, which provides stability and validity for the measures (Ansolabehere, Rodden, & Snyder Jr, 2008). Further in-depth exploration of instrumental partisanship may reveal more insights into the efficacy of appeals on non-partisans. For example, ethnic minorities and immigrants have developed instrumental attachments through policy appeals that precede any expressive partisan identity. Hence, an instrumental attachment battery like the expressive one would enable the exploration of the foundations of instrumental partisanship and allow a fair comparison with expressive partisanship across different outcomes.

This dissertation also focuses on manipulating targeted appeals by changing the message instead of the environment in which targeted appeals occur. However, there are threats to generalizability. As mentioned, online environments allow for microtargeting that connects with more individual characteristics, such as lifestyle or voting propensity (Lavigne, 2021). In this project, the definition of targeted appeals is less about selecting people and more about emphasizing voters' predispositions, such as group identities. For example, the evidence hardly generalizes to the efficacy of microtargeting in social media. The empirical chapters also present more generic appeals, leading to conservative tests of the targeting effect. Furthermore, despite the number of groups randomized in the manipulation, many more groups must be included to increase generalizability (e.g., Clifford & Rainey, 2024). There is a trade-off between the number of groups and the likelihood of deception in an experiment, as some combinations of appeals do not align with public opinion, even by Canadian 'brokerage' standards. Although the findings are based only on the groups randomized in the appeals, prior research that experimentally tested one group for each party is more limited in the capacity for generalizability than this project (Kane et al., 2021).

From cross-sectional data to experimental evidence, it is important to acknowledge the potential threat to internal validity across studies. In Chapters 1 and 2, observational data limit the ability to establish causality between targeted appeals and partisanship. These two chapters offer snapshots of the effect of appeals, and their exposure is likely endogenous to partisan identity strength (Arceneaux, 2010). In Chapter 2, class appeals are based on perceptions, which can be correlated with partisanship. The panel data offers improvements, such as control for time-invariant confounders, testing for endogeneity and

within-individual change. Despite this attempt to mitigate endogeneity between exposure and the outcome, experimental design remains the gold standard. In Chapter 3, I present evidence for the relationship with the manipulation of groups in targeted appeals. Such a design assumes that changing groups change the perceptions of in-targeting, out-targeting, and broad appeals, which impact partisanship. The current design, however, cannot explain whether mere exposure to targeted appeals influences expressive partisanship and elicits partisan-driven outcomes (i.e., affective polarization, motivated reasoning, and in-party voting).

5.5. Future Research

Building on these findings, the following research steps emphasize promising theoretical and empirical frameworks. First, future research should focus on broad appeals. Despite some work dedicated to those appeals (e.g., Somer-Topcu, 2015), there is little theoretical guidance on what constitutes broad appeals and what they communicate to partisan voters. When are voters most likely to react to broad appeals? In some accounts, it is possible to compare broad appeals, such as ‘middle class,’ ‘constituencies,’ or ‘all voters,’ when they are genuinely general and neutral (or without any substantive content that affects voters’ attachments). In other contexts, these broad appeals can reference specific groups without mentioning them. For instance, populist parties often use “the people” as an appeal. Looking at broad appeals specifically, future work might determine whether such appeals are perceived as generic and whether targeted ones backfire in favour of broad appeals (e.g., Hersh & Schaffner, 2013).

Another research step should be determining whether nonpartisans react to appeals, which can craft identification with the party. By manipulating appeals to the electorate and measuring a partisanship battery that makes sense for nonpartisans, future work may observe whether attachments develop from party behaviour to instrumental, expressive, or both attachments. It should be possible to determine a pathway by which partisans form identification. For instance, Bankert (2024) argues that expressive partisanship can be built from instrumental factors, such as policy agreements and positive performances. Nevertheless, another possibility is that appeals increase rejection of political parties and partisanship. Klar and Krupnikov (2016) posit that it is socially desirable to hide or hold public disdain for partisanship. Targeted appeals may influence people's likelihood of identifying as citizens, particularly those exposed to such appeals and who feel that the electorate is segmented. This expectation, if true, would advise parties to use targeted appeals more cautiously.

Empirically, researchers should also focus on exploring the multi-item scale for instrumental partisanship, which includes items that connect partisan support to the centrality of people's positioning on critical issues, the proximity of the party to their ideological stances, and the extent to which the leader's performance attracts people to declare support for the party. This scale might enable the production of a stable and valid measurement for instrumental attachments and disentangle more of the identity and attitudinal components of partisanship. Future research should be dedicated to contrasting this new measurement with the multi-item scale for expressive attachments. Both measures can be included in models that predict different outcomes, such as participation and strategic voting.

Finally, future research should attempt to untangle the effects of sentiments and prior associations from partisanship, examining whether out-targeting appeals to in-groups shape their partisanship and manipulating the associations using groups with unfavourable views. Inside the party's social coalition, there might be groups with distinct views, and partisans may have more positive sentiments toward one group than another. In previous research, Kane, Mason and Wronski (2021) found that group sentiments and group-party associations are positively correlated. If group sentiments drive expressive outcomes, then partisanship follows the views of partisans on social coalitions. Therefore, parties would have only an indirect role in this partisanship, informing voters about group affiliations. Otherwise, if prior associations drive expressive outcomes, partisanship follows parties' traditional group ties. In this case, political parties have a more determinant role in partisanship. The TMP suggests that this is the case. Nevertheless, much more work needs to be done to rule out any alternative mechanisms for partisanship.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Sample Distribution of Partisanship Strength in the CES

I present details about the sample distribution for partisanship strength in the 2019 and 2021 Canadian Election Studies (CES). The tables below report the distribution of these two methods for measuring partisanship strength. In the traditional measure, the partisan groups barely changed the proportion across levels between elections. For instance, the Liberal and Conservative partisans had very similar distributions between 2019 and 2021.

Table A1: Distribution of Partisan Strength by Party (%)

	Bloc Québécois	Conservative	Green	Liberal	NDP
The 2019 elections					
Very Strongly	30	30	36	24	28
Fairly Strongly	51	53	51	54	53
Not Very Strongly	17	16	11	20	16
Don't know/Prefer not to answer	3	1	2	2	2
The 2021 elections					
Very Strongly	32	31	26	24	33
Fairly Strongly	52	50	53	53	54

Table A1: Distribution of Partisan Strength by Party (%)

	Bloc Québécois	Conservative	Green	Liberal	NDP
Not Very Strongly	14	18	19	21	12
Don't know/Prefer not to answer	2	1	2	2	1

Notes: Entries are percentages. The direction of partisanship is determined by a standard question, which reads: "In federal politics, do you usually think of yourself as a:" The strength is measured by a follow-up question that reads: "How strongly [party] do you feel?"

Next, Huddy et al. (2020) refer to partisanship strength as a sense of identity grounded in social identity theory, and it is a better predictor of political outcomes when measured by the multi-item expressive scale than the traditional measure of partisan strength. Here, I provide a more detailed version of Table A2, which displays information about the multi-item expressive scale in the two CES surveys.

Table A2: Distribution of Expressive Partisanship Items in Canada

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	Don't Know
CES 2019 (Post-Election Survey)					
When people criticize this party, it feels like a personal insult.	4	8	35	50	3
When I meet someone who supports this party, I feel connected with this person.	10	20	47	19	4
When I speak about this party, I refer to them as "my party."	8	10	25	54	3

Table A2: Distribution of Expressive Partisanship Items in Canada

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	Don't Know
When people praise the party, it makes me feel good.	13	20	43	20	4
<i>N</i> – Respondents ₂₀₁₉	7,051				
\bar{x}_{2019} (St. Error)	.32 (.003)				
α_{2019}	.84				
CES 2021 (Campaign Period Survey)					
When people criticize this party, it feels like a personal insult.	3	7	34	49	4
When I meet someone who supports this party, I feel connected with this person.	10	22	46	18	6
When I speak about this party, I refer to them as “my party.”	8	11	26	54	4
When people praise the party, it makes me feel good.	13	21	39	20	7
<i>N</i> – Respondents ₂₀₂₁	4,426				
\bar{x}_{2021} (St. Error)	.33 (.004)				
α_{2021}	.84				

Note: Entries are percentages. All items combined generate a scale that ranges from low (0) to high (1)

These two surveys differ on when this multi-item scale is displayed; the 2019 CES had the expressive scale items shown in the post-election survey (PES), and the 2021 CES was displayed during the campaign period survey (CPS). Despite the differences between the 2019 and 2021 CES, the average, standard errors, and alpha are similar in expressive partisanship across samples. Differences in sample size refer to the number of respondents and the number of people with a party identification. I found no meaningful difference in missing responses on the expressive scale.

Finally, Table A3 presents the distribution of partisanship types in the sample. Results suggest the stability of partisan attachments for some parties (i.e., NDP, ambivalent attachments between elections), while also presenting an important dynamic in partisan support (i.e., Conservative, univalent attachments).

Table A3: Distribution of Types of Partisanship by Partisan Group and Election

	Conservative	Green	Liberal	NDP
The 2019 elections				
Ambivalent	31.1	23.2	30.2	21.0
Attitudinal	19.1	21.6	26.0	22.9
Personal	23.4	16.2	17.3	26.6
Univalent	26.5	39.0	26.5	29.5
The 2021 elections				
Ambivalent	32.2	24.1	33.7	21.9

Table A3: Distribution of Types of Partisanship by Partisan Group and Election

	Conservative	Green	Liberal	NDP
Attitudinal	21.6	31.9	22.9	25.7
Personal	22.3	14.7	21.0	19.8
Univalent	23.8	29.3	22.4	32.6

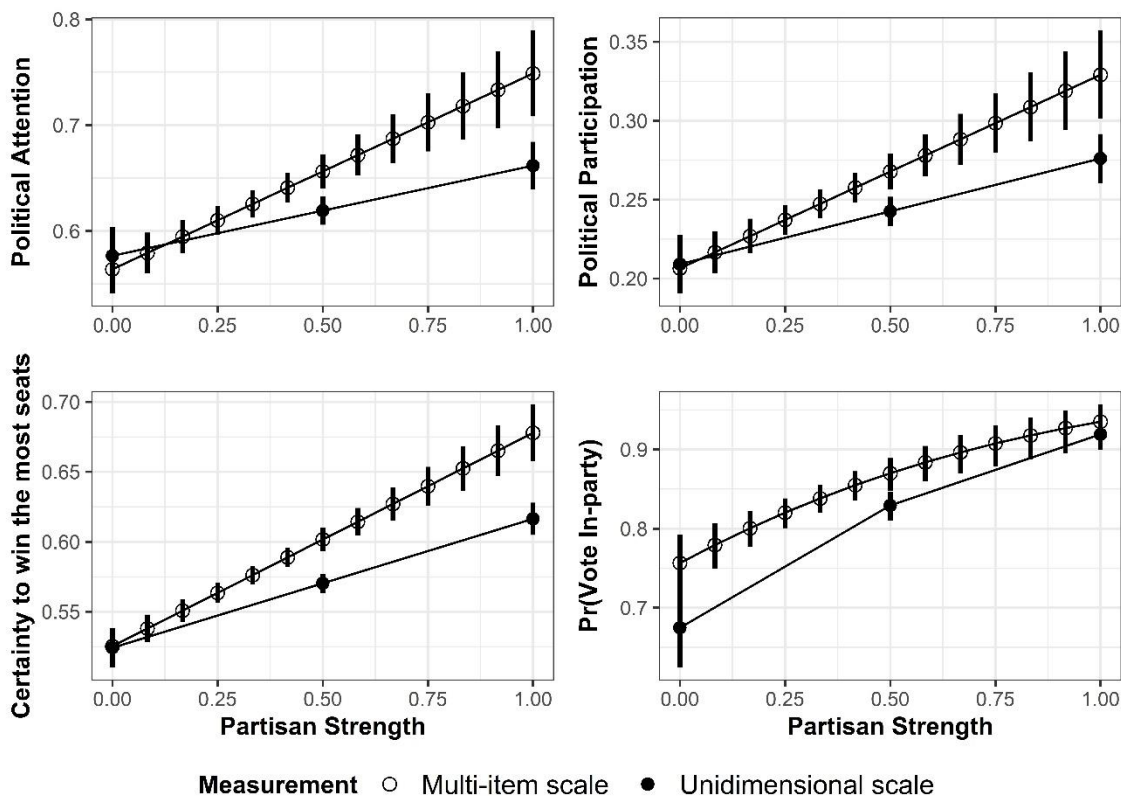
Notes: Entries are percentages. The direction of partisanship is determined by a standard question, which reads: "In federal politics, do you usually think of yourself as a:".

Appendix 2: Multi-item Scale or Traditional Partisanship Strength?

Canadian scholars have largely overlooked expressive partisanship in their models (Gidengil, 2022). Previous studies used the traditional partisanship strength question—How strongly [party] do you feel?—to capture a more emotional-driven attachment to Canadian parties (e.g., Bélanger & Stephenson, 2010; Clarke et al., 2019; Lavigne, 2021). The current study proposes serious consideration of expressive partisanship in Canada using the multi-item expressive scale measured in two years of the Canadian Election Study. There are multiple advantages to using a multi-item scale relative to a three-point question, as in the traditional measure of partisanship strength. For example, a multi-item scale provides more stability in measurement (Ansolabehere, Rodden, & Snyder Jr, 2008).

Another way to assess the two measurements is to compare their predictive power across different outcomes (e.g., Huddy, Bankert, & Davies, 2018). Figure B1 reports the predicted values across multiple partisan-driven mobilization outcomes (political attention, participation, motivated reasoning, and in-party voting). Except for in-party voting, the multi-item scale explains a broader range of values in each outcome than the unidimensional scale. The likelihood of voting for the in-party has the traditional measurement performing better at lower levels. However, weak partisanship is problematic and has been recommended for removal from the analysis of Canadian partisan groups (see Blais et al., 2001).

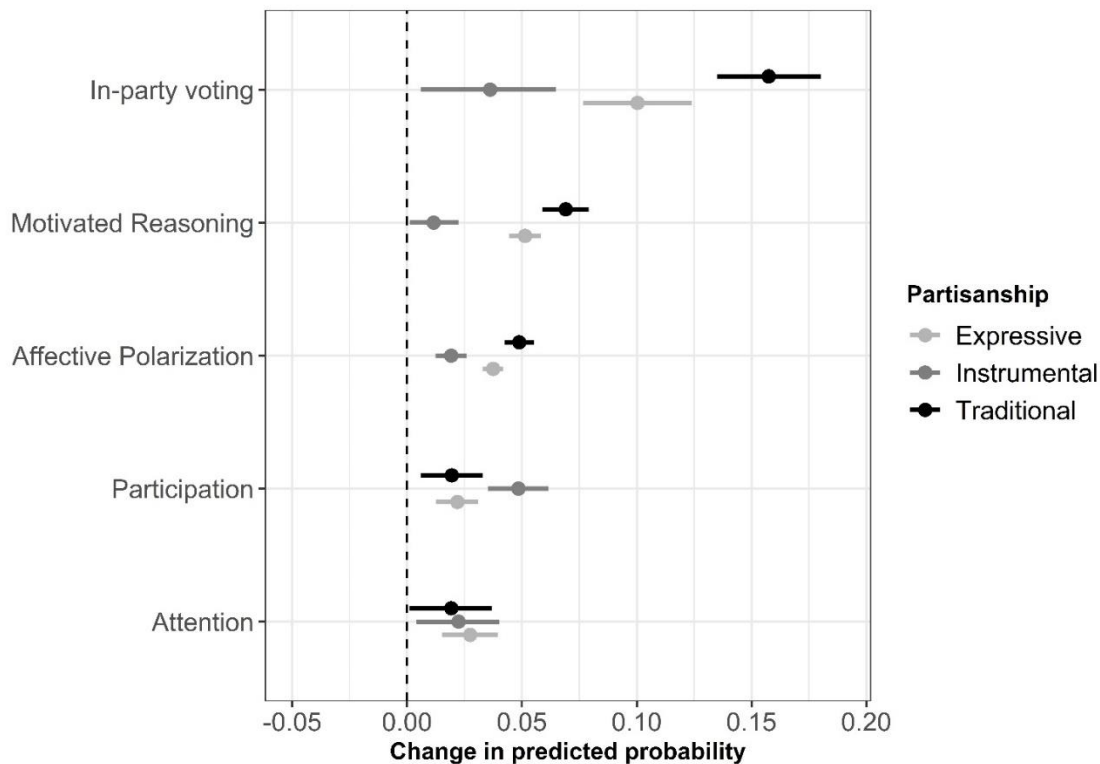
Figure B1: Levels of Political Engagement by Measures of Partisan Strength



Notes: These predicted engagements represent measurements of partisan strength from the campaign period survey, predicting political attention (3-point scale), political participation (multi-item battery), motivated reasoning (certainty of winning the most seats), and voting in the post-election period survey (one month after the election). Traditional strength encompasses the 3-point unidimensional scale measurement and Identity strength, a multi-item identity scale (e.g., Huddy et al. 2015). Both regression models have controls for party identification, ideological strength, proximity, gender, age, education, region, income, religion, and language. All variables were standardized to vary between 0 and 1.

Next, I contrast instrumental and expressive partisanship measures with traditional measurements of partisanship strength using the 2021 CES data. Figure B2 displays the change in predicted probabilities across these measurements. At the bottom, all measurements converge in predicting political attention ($p < 0.05$). Expressive partisanship is significantly associated with increased political attention ($p < 0.05$) and participation ($p < 0.05$). Likewise, an increase in instrumental partisanship reflects a significant increase in both political attention ($p < 0.05$) and participation ($p < 0.05$). Furthermore, expressive scale and traditional measure have similar predictive power in these forms of mobilization.

Figure B2: Change in probabilities between expressive and instrumental partisanship



Notes: Values represent changes in the predicted probability of each outcome, based on shifting expressive and instrumental partisanship from its sample 25th to 75th percentile, with all other variables held at their sample means. The top value represents estimates of respondents' expressive partisanship on the multi-item scale, the middle value estimates the instrumental partisanship on the multi-item ideological strength scale, and the bottom value estimates the partisanship strength, including weak partisans in a continuous version. All variables were standardized to vary between 0 and 1.

The figure also shows ways in which expressive partisanship diverges in its predictive power. As expected, expressive partisanship is statistically associated with the rise of motivated reasoning ($p < 0.05$). In contrast, instrumental partisanship is not associated with this outcome. To different degrees, these two partisanship are associated with in-party voting. The likelihood of voting is statistically associated with changes in both expressive partisanship ($p < 0.05$) and instrumental partisanship ($p < 0.05$). The reason for these differences in magnitude reflects the nature of both partisanship. While instrumental partisanship reflects an attitudinal attachment with responsiveness to political events, expressive partisanship involves perception bias and wishful thinking. Thus,

expressive partisanship is strongly associated with Canadians confirming their vote choice to their favourite party.

Lastly, Guntermann and Lachapelle (2020) suggest that the strength of party attitudes rather than partisanship measures should reflect partisan-driven mobilization, such as cue-taking. I include in-party ratings in separate models to predict mobilization outcomes. The party attitude predicts mobilization similarly to expressive partisanship, except that it predicts higher levels of participation, which expressive partisanship predicts more strongly.

Appendix 3: Measurement Invariance Between French and English

In Canada, a concern involves the coherence of partisanship across linguistic groups. To assess this concern, the nuances in translation between the English and French versions should be consistently interpreted by the multi-item expressive scale.⁵⁶ I run a structural model that includes the four items of the expressive scale in both national samples and the language used in the survey. In two tables, the model suggests a good fit and invariance across linguistic groups (2019 CES: RMSEA = 0.063; CFI = 0.991; df = 8. 2021 CES: RMSEA = 0.073; CFI = 0.987; df = 8).

Table C1: fit statistics for the multi-group expressive battery (CES 2019)

	<i>chi-square</i>	<i>df</i>	CFI	RMSEA
Anglophone Model (N = 5,805)	98.113	2	.990	.091
Francophone Model (N = 673)	5.723	2	.997	.053
Configural Model	103.836	4	.991	.088
Metric Model	114.699	7	.990	.069
Scalar Model*	115.138	8	.990	.064

Notes: N=6,478. The 'lavaan' package calculates fit measures. Partial measurement invariance calculated in the scalar model by seeing the two items (1 and 3) intercepts across groups.

⁵⁶ For the instrumental model, I followed Bankert (2024) and combined multiple measures of evaluations and issue positions. Thus, there is no reason for the instrumental partisanship measurement invariance.

These results emphasize the invariance across English and French respondents in their interpretations of expressive items, suggesting that other factors (e.g., party-level factors) are related to the strength of expressive partisanship rather than survey language.

Table C2: fit statistics for multi-group expressive battery (CES 2021)

	<i>chi-square</i>	<i>df</i>	CFI	RMSEA
Anglophone Model (N = 2,902)	63.339	2	.987	.103
Francophone Model (N = 1,035)	.659	2	1.000	.000
Configural Model	63.998	4	.991	.087
Metric Model	89.552	7	.987	.077
Scalar Model*	93.270	8	.987	.074

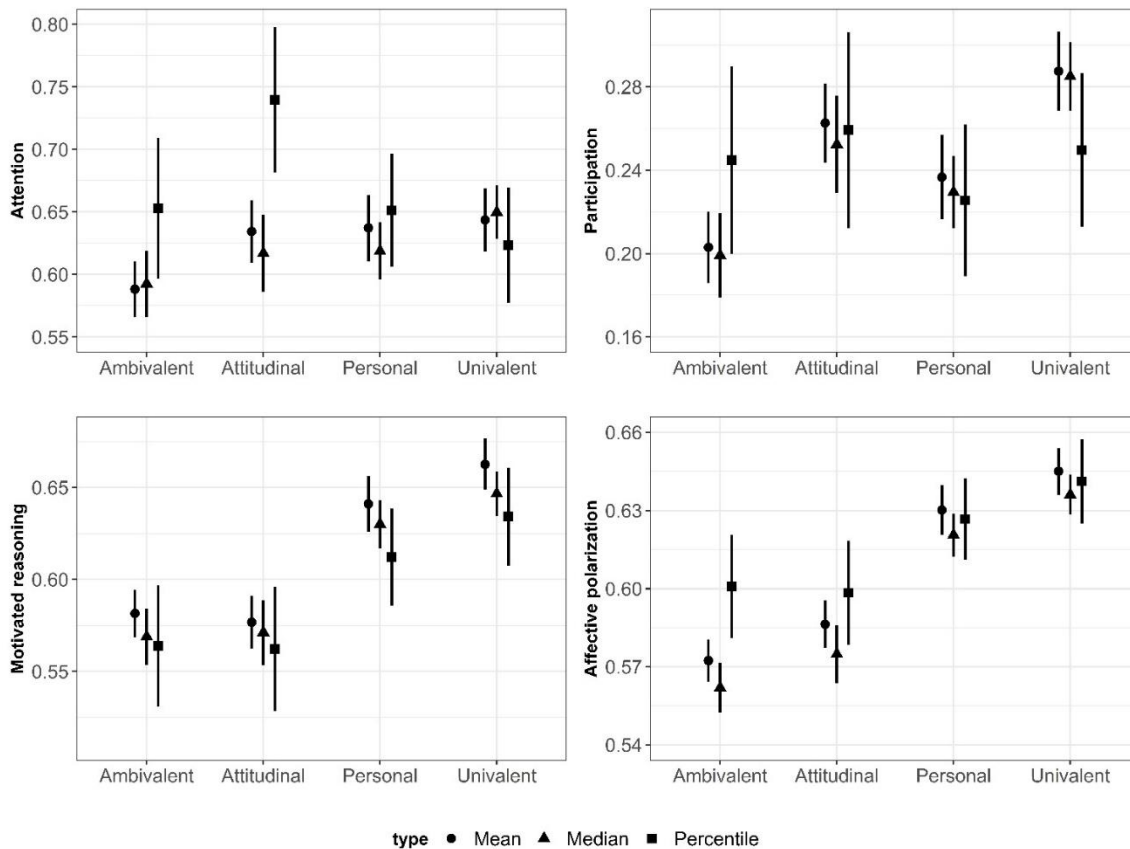
Notes: N=3,937. The 'lavaan' package calculates fit measures. Partial measurement invariance calculated in the scalar model by freeing two items (1 and 3) intercepts across groups.

Appendix 4: Do Alternative Cut-Offs Alter the Results?

I select the averages of instrumental and expressive measurements to build the four categories of partisan attachments (i.e., ambivalence, attitudinal, personal, and univalence). However, this decision is entirely empirical, so the question remains: do the cut-offs alter the results? I re-run the models that predict partisan-driven mobilization with the four categories divided by two new cut-offs: a) by the median of each partisanship and b) by the percentiles of each partisanship. In Figure D1, I examine whether the alternative cut-offs differ from the average. The percentile cut-off represents the distance between each measurement's median and the 25th and 75th percentiles. For example, the ambivalent category refers to respondents who fall between the 25th percentile and the median of the instrumental and expressive partisanship scales. The attitudinal attachment refers to the respondents between the 25th and the median on expressive partisanship, while the median and the 75th percentile on instrumental partisanship. Due to these cut-offs in the percentiles, the sample size diminishes because they remove more extreme values and focus on respondents closer to the median.

On only two occasions do the estimations change from those with the average cutoffs: i) the first panel with the attitudinal attachment from the percentiles, and ii) the second panel in which ambivalent attachment from the percentiles differs from the estimations of the other two cutoffs. In the other cases, the cut-offs do not vary beyond each other's confidence intervals.

Figure D1: Predictive probabilities across partisan attachments by cut-offs



Notes: Values represent the predicted probabilities of partisan-driven mobilization, with all other variables set at their sample means. Confidence intervals are 95%. All variables were standardized to vary between 0 and 1. The models include demographics, such as gender, age, education, region, religion, and linguistic group. These models contain political interest. Cut-offs refer to values in each partisanship measurement used to build the attachment typology.

Appendix 5: Do Moderation and Cross-pressures Explain Conservative Partisanship?

In this chapter, I focus on the conditional effect of policy stances and Conservative identification to explain the impact of out-targeting on traditional constituencies during subsequent elections. It remains to be seen whether cross-pressure scores and moderation also have conditional effects on Conservative attachments. I run a linear model to explain expressive partisanship in each election. I include demographics (e.g., age, gender, region, and francophone status) and political interest in this model. The dependent variable is expressive partisanship that ranges from low (0) to high (1). Lastly, I interact Conservative identification (0 or 1) with the factors of interest: pro-life view (0 or 1), anti-environment view (0 or 1), cross-pressure score (0 to 1), and perceived moderation (0 to 1).

Table E1 presents the results for expressive partisanship in each election. In both years, the only significant condition was in the environmental policy domain ($p < 0.05$). Ideological moderation and cross-pressure scores have the expected negative signs but do not reach statistical significance.

Table E1: Regression Model on Expressive Partisanship

	CES 2019	CES 2021
Conservative identifiers	.057 (.068)	.075 (.058)
Conservative identifiers × Abortion: Pro-life	-.033 (.027)	-.031 (.029)
Conservative identifiers × Environment: Anti	-.076** (.029)	-.087** (.028)
Conservative identifiers × CP score	-.008 (.090)	-0.77 (0.79)

	CES 2019	CES 2021
Conservative identifiers	.057 (.068)	.075 (.058)
Conservative identifiers × Perceived moderation	-.130 (.212)	-.299 (.183)
Constant	.369*** (.085)	.323*** (.058)
Campaign Period	No	Yes
<i>N-Respondents</i>	1,737	2,060
Adjusted R-Squared	.033	.030

Note: '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05

Appendix 6: Profile of Partisanship in the BES Panel Data

Here, I present the details across waves in the BES panel data. From wave 21 to 29, the dataset spans the years 2019 to 2024, measuring party identification and expressive partisanship. In this chapter, I consider partisan supporters from strong to weak partisans. Table F1 describes the profile of partisans across five waves. The percentage of partisans remains consistently the same, around 81%, suggesting strong stability in party identification over the years. The larger number of partisans, and strong partisans, over time suggests stronger attachments. Despite the recommendations to exclude weak partisans from the analysis (e.g., Blais et al., 2001), I keep these partisans in the models as they responded to the expressive battery.

Table F1: Profile of Partisans Across Five Waves

	Total of Partisans	Total of Strong Partisans	Percentage of Partisans
Wave 21	24,701	15,530	82%
Wave 23	25,138	15,456	81%
Wave 25	24,632	15,062	81%
Wave 27	24,583	16,262	81%
Wave 29	25,144	16,573	81%

Source: British Election Study Panel Data.

Despite the overall stability, partisan groups have changed during this period. The Conservative Party has experienced a decline in the number of identifiers relative to the

partisan sample, from 43.3% to 31.8%. In contrast, the Labour Party switches position as the largest partisan group in the sample in Wave 29. It suggests that focusing on specific groups and parties may indicate a much more dynamic scenario for partisan attachments.

Table F2: Distribution of Partisans Across Five Waves (%)

	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrats	Other
Wave 21	43.3	32.3	9.5	14.8
Wave 23	39.8	34.1	10.9	15.1
Wave 25	37.5	35.5	10.9	16
Wave 27	35.5	35.4	9.7	19.4
Wave 29	31.8	33.5	11.2	23.5

Source: The 2019 British Election Study.

Appendix 7: Are Perceived Class Appeals Biased?

There is a longstanding debate on whether voters can identify which group is seeking support for a particular party. While for some scholars, people are competent to associate groups and parties (Goggin, Henderson, & Theodoridis, 2020; Orr & Huber, 2020), others argue that voters are biased (Ahler & Sood, 2018). In this chapter, I employed a measure to capture perceptions of appeals that was used in recent studies (Evans & Tilley, 2017; Grant & Evans, 2024). Using this measurement, a question remains: Are these perceptions biased? Or can partisans correctly identify whether the opposition is looking after a particular class?

Ideally, to answer these questions, we would need to compare the estimate to a benchmark (e.g., party manifestos or campaign materials). This is beyond the goals of this dissertation. Future research can be dedicated to validating this measurement. Here, I present the distributions of class appeals by partisan group. Suppose there is a clear preference among each partisan group to indicate that the party appeals to both the working and middle classes. In that case, it would suggest that such a measurement may contain a systematic error, and further analysis is needed.

Table G1: Distribution of class appeals in Wave 21 by partisan group (%)

	Conservative identifiers		Labour identifiers	
	Conservative	Labour	Conservative	Labour
Emphasis on the Working class				
Very closely	11.0	24.6	1.4	28.9
Fairly closely	62.5	39.9	9.5	56.8

Table G1: Distribution of class appeals in Wave 21 by partisan group (%)

	Conservative identifiers		Labour identifiers	
	Conservative	Labour	Conservative	Labour
Not very closely	24.2	25.0	48.7	12.0
Not at all closely	2.2	10.5	40.4	2.2
Emphasis on the Middle-class				
Very closely	27.4	5.4	30.5	8.6
Fairly closely	65.9	25.2	49.5	64.8
Not very closely	6.0	52.4	16.2	24.2
Not at all closely	0.7	16.9	3.9	2.4

Notes: N = 6,760. Percentages extracted from the question reading: 'Some people say that all political parties look after certain groups and are not so concerned about others. How closely do you think the _____ looks after the interests of... Working-class people/Middle-class people.'

Table G2: Distribution of class appeals in Wave 23 by partisan group (%)

	Conservative identifiers		Labour identifiers	
	Conservative	Labour	Conservative	Labour
Emphasis on the Working class				
Very closely	9.9	28.6	1.8	35.7
Fairly closely	50.6	41.6	6.5	53.4
Not very closely	33.0	20.7	46.8	8.3

Table G2: Distribution of class appeals in Wave 23 by partisan group (%)

	Conservative identifiers		Labour identifiers	
	Conservative	Labour	Conservative	Labour
Not at all closely	6.5	9.1	44.9	2.7
Emphasis on the Middle-class				
Very closely	31.1	5.1	43.8	11.7
Fairly closely	55.1	25.8	37.1	66.0
Not very closely	11.0	49.8	14.5	20.0
Not at all closely	2.9	19.3	4.6	2.3

Notes: N = 6,760. Percentages extracted from the question reading: 'Some people say that all political parties look after certain groups and are not so concerned about others. How closely do you think the _____ looks after the interests of... Working-class people/Middle-class people.'

Table G3: Distribution of class appeals in Wave 25 by partisan group (%)

	Conservative identifiers		Labour identifiers	
	Conservative	Labour	Conservative	Labour
Emphasis on the Working class				
Very closely	9.1	30.3	1.1	33.2
Fairly closely	47.9	39.8	5.7	53.5
Not very closely	34.6	20.6	42.6	10.2

Table G3: Distribution of class appeals in Wave 25 by partisan group (%)

	Conservative identifiers		Labour identifiers	
	Conservative	Labour	Conservative	Labour
Not at all closely	8.4	9.3	50.5	3.1
Emphasis on the Middle-class				
Very closely	28.7	3.2	41.9	11.9
Fairly closely	54.6	23.5	36.1	65.9
Not very closely	13.2	50.2	16.6	19.7
Not at all closely	3.5	23.1	5.4	2.5

Notes: N = 6,760. Percentages extracted from the question reading: 'Some people say that all political parties look after certain groups and are not so concerned about others. How closely do you think the _____ looks after the interests of... Working-class people/Middle-class people.'

Table G4: Distribution of class appeals in Wave 27 by partisan group (%)

	Conservative identifiers		Labour identifiers	
	Conservative	Labour	Conservative	Labour
Emphasis on the Working class				
Very closely	9.7	31.0	1.7	42.7
Fairly closely	49.7	44.7	7.6	48.5

Table G4: Distribution of class appeals in Wave 27 by partisan group (%)

	Conservative identifiers		Labour identifiers	
	Conservative	Labour	Conservative	Labour
Not very closely	33.9	18.6	48.5	7.3
Not at all closely	6.8	5.7	42.3	1.5
Emphasis on the Middle-class				
Very closely	37.0	4.6	40.1	14.6
Fairly closely	50.9	29.2	41.1	66.0
Not very closely	10.5	50.0	14.3	17.7
Not at all closely	1.5	16.2	4.6	1.7

Notes: N = 6,760. Percentages extracted from the question reading: 'Some people say that all political parties look after certain groups and are not so concerned about others. How closely do you think the _____ looks after the interests of... Working-class people/Middle-class people.'

Table G5: Distribution of class appeals in Wave 29 by partisan group (%)

	Conservative identifiers		Labour identifiers	
	Conservative	Labour	Conservative	Labour
Emphasis on the Working class				
Very closely	8.5	35.1	1.6	38.7

Table G5: Distribution of class appeals in Wave 29 by partisan group (%)

	Conservative identifiers		Labour identifiers	
	Conservative	Labour	Conservative	Labour
Fairly closely	54.8	42.7	6.1	52.6
Not very closely	33.0	16.4	44.0	5.9
Not at all closely	3.8	5.8	48.2	2.8
Emphasis on the Middle-class				
Very closely	24.8	3.1	31.0	11.6
Fairly closely	64.2	27.0	44.9	70.0
Not very closely	9.7	53.2	18.9	17.5
Not at all closely	1.3	16.8	5.3	1.0

Notes: N = 6,760. Percentages extracted from the question reading: 'Some people say that all political parties look after certain groups and are not so concerned about others. How closely do you think the _____ looks after the interests of... Working-class people/Middle-class people.'

From Tables G1 to G5, partisans tend to acknowledge when the other party looks more closely at the in-class group (e.g., among Labour identifiers, 31% say Conservative vs 11.6% say Labour looks after the middle-class interests in wave 29). However, some partisans tend to downplay the appeals from the opposition to the ingroup (5.3% Labour

identifiers find that the Conservative Party does not closely align with middle-class interests at all). This result suggests a potential partisan bias in responses to this question.

Appendix 8: Stability of 6-item Expressive Partisanship Battery

Following Bankert et al. (2017), I test the scale's invariance across five waves of the BES. This test aims to examine whether expressive partisanship has been measured consistently across years, demonstrating stability of the battery. This test compares the fit of a series of hierarchical models with increasingly constrained parameters, ranging from configural to scalar invariance. In Table H1, I evaluate the expressive scale for the sample. It shows consistency in the battery.

Table H1: Fit statistics for wave expressive measurement invariance

	<i>chi-square</i>	<i>df</i>	CFI	RMSEA
Configural model	11364.374	335	.928	.074
Metric model	14805.064	359	.905	.082
Scalar model	15116.954	383	.904	.080

Notes: N= 5,981 in all five waves. Missing data was imputed using multiple imputations in 'lavaan.'

Table H2 investigates differences across partisan groups (i.e., Conservatives and Labour partisans). Despite the results suggesting variance across waves with constrained parameters, they remain under acceptable bounds (CFI < .01) and a modest result for RMSEA. This suggests support for metric and scalar invariance and stability in the expressive battery across partisan groups.

Table H2: Fit statistics for multi-group expressive battery

	<i>chi-square</i>	<i>df</i>	CFI	RMSEA
Conservative Partisan Model (N = 2,703)	9480.734	335	.877	.100

Table H2: Fit statistics for multi-group expressive battery

	<i>chi-square</i>	<i>df</i>	CFI	RMSEA
Labour Partisan Model (N = 2,263)	8007.113	335	.871	.101
Two Simple Models	17487.847	670	.875	.101
Metric Model	17881.877	700	.872	.099
Scalar Model	18293.072	725	.869	.099

Notes: N=5,981. Missing data was imputed using multiple imputations in 'lavaan.'

Finally, Table H3 reports the parameters for changes in expressive partisanship by partisan groups. This result shows strong and similar short-term stability (waves 21 to 23), which declines after a few waves. The long-term stability declines faster for Conservatives than for Labour partisans, who demonstrate more consistency across five waves.

Table H3: Stability of Expressive Partisanship by Partisan Group

	Conservative partisans	Labour partisans
Waves 21 to 23	.827 (.041)	.777 (.040)
Waves 21 to 25	.244 (.043)	.371 (.044)
Waves 21 to 27	-.122 (.045)	.289 (.047)
Waves 21 to 29	-.086 (.050)	.091 (.059)

Notes: Standardized regression parameters for changes in expressive partisanship (standard error in parentheses) from an auto-regressive model (AR2).

Appendix 9: Fixed or Random-Effects?

There is a debate on whether to use FE or RE in panel data (Clark & Linzer, 2015). As the FE removes time-invariant variables, I select the RE as a way to represent these variables (e.g., party identification or subjective class membership) in the in-targeting model. However, I run a Hausman Test to assess if the RE model is inconsistent. According to the results, FE should be the most appropriate for this panel data. For instance, model 2 presents a significant difference between the FE and RE models using the same variables ($p < .001$). Table I1 reports the results.

Table I1: Fit statistics for the Hausman Test

	<i>chi-square</i>	<i>df</i>	p-value
Model 1	25.384	6	< .001
Model 2	53.446	15	< .001
Model 3	56.886	20	< .001
Model 4	68.223	15	< .001

Notes: The Hausman Test compares each model in FE and RE versions. When the p-value is below 0.05, it means that the FE is preferable.

Next, I report the full table of RE models. The most comprehensive model includes age (reference = 18-25), gender (reference = female), country (reference = Wales), unemployment status, educational level, and identification as Black or Asian.

Table I2: Random effects of group appeals on expressive partisanship

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Labour Supporter (ref = Conservative)	.023*	.021	-.000	.035
	(.010)	(.011)	(.018)	(.019)
Appeals to Workers (-1;+1)	-.042***	-.041***	-.022	
	(.010)	(.011)	(.015)	
Appeals to Middle class (-1;+1)	.029**	.030*	.033	
	(.011)	(.013)	(.017)	
Working-class (ref = Middle class)	-.008	-.004	-.002	-.002
	(.006)	(.007)	(.012)	(.007)
Labour Supporter x Appeals to Workers	.096***	.099***	.118***	
	(.015)	(.017)	(.029)	
Labour Supporter x Appeals to the Middle class	-.032*	-.027	-.037	
	(.016)	(.017)	(.028)	
Working-class x Labour Supporter			.029	
			(.022)	
Working-class x Appeals to Workers			-.038	
			(.021)	
Working-class x Appeals to the Middle class			-.006	
			(.025)	
Working-class x Labour x Appeals to Workers			-.013	
			(.035)	
Working-class x Labour x Appeals to the Middle class			.016	
			(.035)	

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Convergence in Appeals to Working-class (0;1)				-.012 (.015)
Convergence in Appeals to Middle Class (0;1)				-.041** (.014)
Labour x Convergence in Appeals to the Working-class				-.052* (.020)
Labour x Convergence in Appeals to the Middle-class				.048* (.021)
Ideological Position		.103*** (.012)	.103*** (.012)	.106*** (.012)
Scotland (ref = Wales)		-.014 (.023)	-.011 (.023)	-.009 (.023)
England (ref = Wales)		.001 (.017)	.002 (.017)	.003 (.017)
Age: 26-35		-.025 (.033)	-.027 (.033)	-.027 (.033)
Age: 36-45		-.003 (.031)	-.006 (.031)	-.006 (.031)
Age: 56-65		-.037 (.030)	-.040 (.031)	-.039* (.030)
Age: 66+		-.031 (.031)	-.033* (.031)	-.035* (.031)
Female		-.007	-.007	-.007

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
		(.008)	(.008)	(.008)
Black and Asian		.011 (.024)	.011 (.027)	.011 (.024)
Unemployed		-.004 (.009)	-.004 (.009)	-.003 (.008)
Educational Level (1;5)		-.000 (.015)	-.000 (.015)	-.000 (.015)
Constant	.453*** (.007)	.460*** (.038)	.460*** (.038)	.499*** (.039)
Num.Obs.	3,839	3,081	3,081	3,081
R2	.117	.156	.158	.152
R2 Adj.	.116	.151	.152	.147
θ	.58	.58	.52	.58
	.011	.011	.011	.011
	.017	.017	.017	.017

Notes: '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05

Appendix 10: Cross-lagged Regression Table

Here, I report the complete table for the cross-lagged regressions. I run two separate models for each partisan group (i.e., Labour and Conservative identifiers). As contemporaneous controls, I included age and education levels.

Table J1: Structural Equation Model between Class Appeals and Partisanship

	Labour partisans	Conservative partisans
Expressive partisanship		
Expressive partisanship (t-1)	.646*** (.018)	.631*** (.019)
Appeals to Workers (t-1)	.022** (.008)	-.017* (.007)
Appeals to the Middle class (t-1)	-.009 (.008)	.003* (.008)
Educational level	.002 (.001)	.001 (.001)
Age	.000 (.001)	-.003 (.002)
Appeals to Workers		
Appeals to Workers (t-1)	.496*** (.015)	.513*** (.014)
Expressive partisanship (t-1)	.226*** (.046)	-0.217*** (.052)
Appeals to the Middle class (t-1)	.002	.076***

	Labour partisans	Conservative partisans
	(.011)	(.013)
Educational level	.003 (.003)	.006 (.003)
Age	-.007 (.002)	-.006 (.003)
Appeals to the Middle class		
Appeals to the Middle class (t-1)	.494*** (.015)	.391*** (.014)
Expressive partisanship (t-1)	-.005 (.057)	.135** (.052)
Appeals to Workers (t-1)	-.016 (.013)	.059*** .011
Educational level	-.001 (.003)	.002 (.003)
Age	.005 (.003)	.011*** (.003)
Num.Obs.	2,509	3,040
df	195	195
chi-square	1363.794	1494.697

Notes: '****' 0.001 '***' 0.01 '**' 0.05

Appendix 11: Experiment Demographic Breakdown

In this study, I conducted an online survey experiment (N = 1,464) among Ontario residents from May 8 to 17, 2024. I hired Léger Opinion to distribute the survey to its panelists and participated in all stages of the data collection, following the best practices in survey research. Despite the experimental design, the data collection was not based on probability-based techniques, increasing the biases associated with sampling citizens from different socioeconomic categories, educational levels, and ages.

Table K1: Sample descriptive statistics

Variable		Study 1 2024	Ontario 2021
Gender	<i>Female</i>	729 (50.2%)	(50.7%)
	<i>Male</i>	722 (49.8%)	(49.3%)
Age in years		51.3	41.6
Education	<i>No school</i>	1 (0.1%)	(10%)
	<i>High school</i>	167 (11.4%)	(23%)
	<i>College</i>	291 (19.8%)	(25%)
	<i>Bachelor's degree</i>	502 (34.1%)	(33%)
Survey Mode		<i>online</i>	
N		1,470 (100.0%)	

Source: 2021 Canadian census. The percentages included for education represent participants with completed degrees. The sample is unweighted.

Table K1 presents descriptive statistics for the study sample, benchmarked against the 2021 Canadian census for Ontario. The sample's gender breakdown is very close to the

census distribution. As expected, the distribution of age and educational attainment underrepresents lower levels. In the sample, the average age is higher than the Ontario population (51% and 41%). Moreover, I sampled a close proportion of those with Bachelors degrees relative to the population. Although I controlled for these demographics in the models, the evidence in this study should be considered in light of the sample characteristics and limitations that stem from it.

Appendix 12: Does Targeting Influence Expressive Responses of Non-Partisans?

When participants denied any party identification in the standard and follow-up questions, they were not included in the analysis presented in the main body of the chapter. However, the question remains: do targeted appeals also impact expressive responses from non-partisans? Federico and Ekstrom (2018) define political-identity centrality as “the extent that one’s political preferences are central to the self-concept” (p. 901). This factor has an expressive function of saying more about who the participant is by reflecting core aspects of personality. Hence, participants without a political affiliation may still hold politics as central to their self-concept.

Table L1 displays the multi-item scale for political identity centrality. In the survey, non-partisans received this scale instead of the expressive scale. This scale involves questions about the importance of political attitudes and the relevance of beliefs in defining the individual. I combined the items and rescaled them to vary between 0 and 1. 237 participants, 16% of the sample, received the questions for the scale, which presents a moderate average and a good internal consistency (see Table L1).

Table L1: Multi-item of political-identity centrality

Item	Question-wording
#1	Overall, my political attitudes and beliefs have very little to do with how I feel about myself.
#2	My political attitudes and beliefs are an important reflection of who I am.
#3	My political attitudes and beliefs are unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.
#4	In general, my political attitudes and beliefs are an important part of my self-image.
\bar{x} (S.E.)	0.499 (0.017)
α	0.86

Note: All items were combined to generate a scale that ranges from low (0) to high (1).

I ran an OLS model that includes targeted and broad appeals (here, it does not matter whether they are in- or out-targeting) as a dichotomous variable. About 179 participants received a broad appeal, while 58 received a targeted appeal. Table L2 reports the results. Targeted appeal treatments, relative to broad appeals, do not reach statistical significance. Therefore, receiving targeted appeals did not prime the centrality of politics to the non-partisans. In this model, those deeply involved in politics also report a high level of political identity centrality ($p < 0.001$).

Table L2: Regression Model on Identity Centrality

	Identity centrality
Intercept	.312 (.066)
Targeted Appeals	.023 (.054)
Political involvement	.436 (.006) ***
<i>N-Respondents</i>	230
R ²	.240
R ² Adj.	.202

p ***'0.001 **'0.01 '*'0.05. This OLS model controls for age, gender, education, unionization, being born in Canada and political involvement.

To date, this is the first time the Political Involvement Scale has been used in a Canadian sample. Table L3 displays the scale by item, average, and alpha. Each item ranges from strongly agree to disagree strongly. I also combined the items and rescaled them to range from 0 to 1. The scale has a good internal consistency

Table L3: Multi-item of Political Involvement

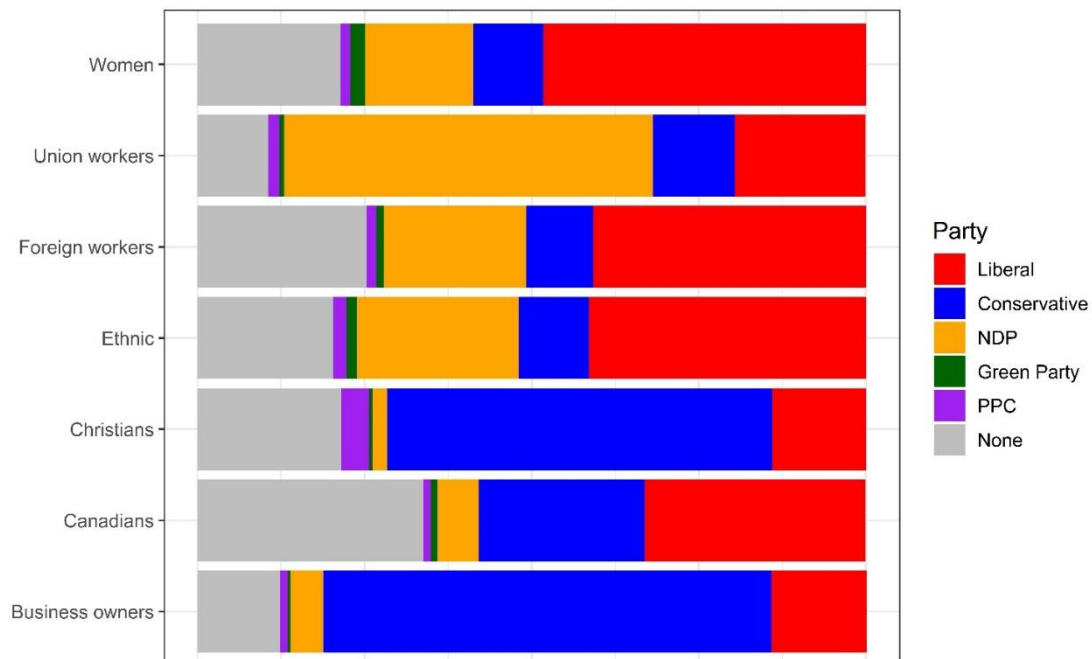
Item	Question-wording
#1	It is important to share your political opinions with others.
#2	It is important to share political news stories with other people.
#3	It is important to encourage others to be more involved in politics.
#4	When people tell me that they do not follow politics, it upsets me.
#5	It is important to spend at least 30 minutes a day learning about the latest events in politics.
#6	It is important to correct people's misperceptions about politics, even if they do not want to hear these corrections.
#7	It is important to donate money to political campaigns
\bar{x} (S.E.)	0.559 (0.005)
α	0.84

Note: All items were combined to generate a scale that ranges from low (0) to high (1).

Appendix 13: Party Image Distribution

There is a longstanding debate on whether voters can associate groups with each party. While some authors suggest that voters accurately understand these connections (Goggin, Henderson, & Theodoridis, 2020; Orr & Hurber, 2021), others suggest that partisans report biases when indicating group-party associations, either overrepresenting their party for preferred groups or underrepresenting preferred groups in the opposition (Ahler & Sood, 2018). Here, I examine how voters associate groups with each party. In Canada, some associations are more feasible than others. For example, the Liberal Party is associated with new Canadians and ethnic minorities (Bilodeau & Kanji, 2010), and Christians are associated with the Conservative Party (Wilkins-Laflamme, 2016).

Figure M1: Distribution of Party Image in Canada



Notes: The results show the proportion of participants who indicated a prior association between a social group and one of the political parties. Only union workers, foreign workers, business owners, and Canadians were presented in targeted appeals. The other groups were asked to evaluate the overall perceptions of associations.

In Figure M1, I present the extended list of groups and the distribution of their associations with the party. Based on these distributions, Canadians can associate their parties with the groups queried. Beyond the economic cleavages used in the experimental manipulations, these others present the expected most frequent associations for each party. The Liberal Party is associated with women (48%) and ethnic minorities (41%). Again, Christians are associated with the Conservative Party (58%). Besides the union workers, the most frequent association with the NDP is with the ethnic minorities (24%). This suggests that this party approximates and competes with the Liberal Party for these cleavages (e.g., Cochrane, 2015).

Appendix 14: Expressive versus Instrumental Scales

The current study proposes an interplay between instrumental and expressive partisanship. In traditional measures of partisanship, strength does not differentiate between these two types of attachments, despite scholars arguing that it often captures emotion-driven attachments (Clarke et al., 2019). Using a multi-item scale has multiple advantages; for instance, it provides stability in measurement (Ansolabehere et al., 2008).

Table N1: Multi-item expressive and instrumental scales

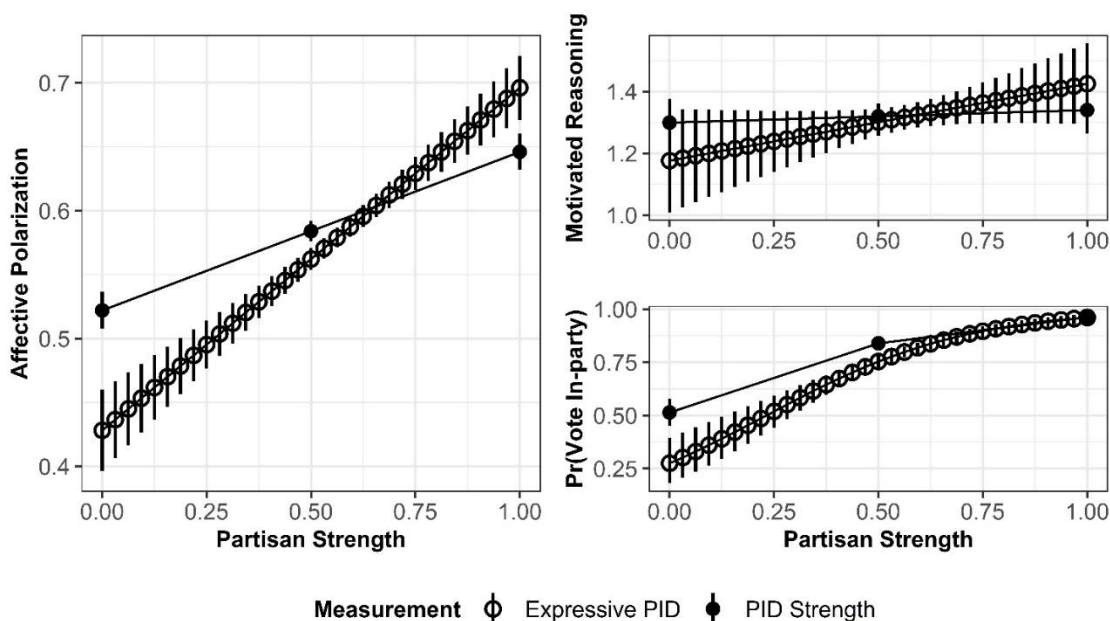
Item	Question-wording	
	Expressive Partisanship	Instrumental Partisanship
#1	When people criticize this party, it feels like a personal insult.	The government should redistribute income from those who are better off.
#2	When I meet someone who supports this party, I feel connected with this person.	Big business takes advantage of ordinary people.
#3	When I speak about this party, I refer to them as “my party.”	Ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation’s wealth.
#4	When people praise the party, it makes me feel good.	There is one law for the rich and one for the poor.
#5	When I speak about this party, I usually say “we” instead of “they”.	Management will always try to get the better of employees if it gets the chance.
#6	I am interested in what other people think about this party.	Ideological intensity (0-100)
#7	I have a lot in common with other supporters of this party.	
#8	If this party does badly in opinion polls, my day is ruined.	
\bar{x} (S.E.)	.558 (.005)	.563 (.004)
α	.86	.77

Notes: All items were combined to generate a scale that ranges from low (0) to high (1).

Table N1 presents the items used to measure both types of partisanship. Each item of the expressive scale has four points, ranging from never (1) to always (4). In this study, I used the complete version of the expressive scale (Bankert et al., 2017). There remains a

lack of theoretical and empirical tests for the measurement of instrumental partisanship using a multi-item scale. I selected four items that represent views on redistribution and combine them with ideological intensity. Future research should be dedicated to developing a measure that captures instrumental proximity to a party.

Figure N1: Levels of Political Engagement by Measures of Partisan Strength



Note: These predicted engagements represent measurements of partisan strength measured in the survey, predicting affective polarization, motivated reasoning, and in-party voting. Traditional strength encompasses a 3-point scale and expressive PID is a multi-item identity scale (e.g., Huddy et al. 2015). All variables were standardized to vary between 0 and 1.

Another way to assess the performance of measurements is to compare their predictive power across outcomes. Figure N1 replicates the predicted values across behavioural outcomes (i.e., affective polarization, motivated reasoning, and in-party voting) between the expressive scale and traditional measurement of partisanship strength. The expressive scale shows more variation (see Figure N1 above) in all three cases than the traditional measurement.

Appendix 15: Sensitivity Analysis for Motivated Reasoning and Voting

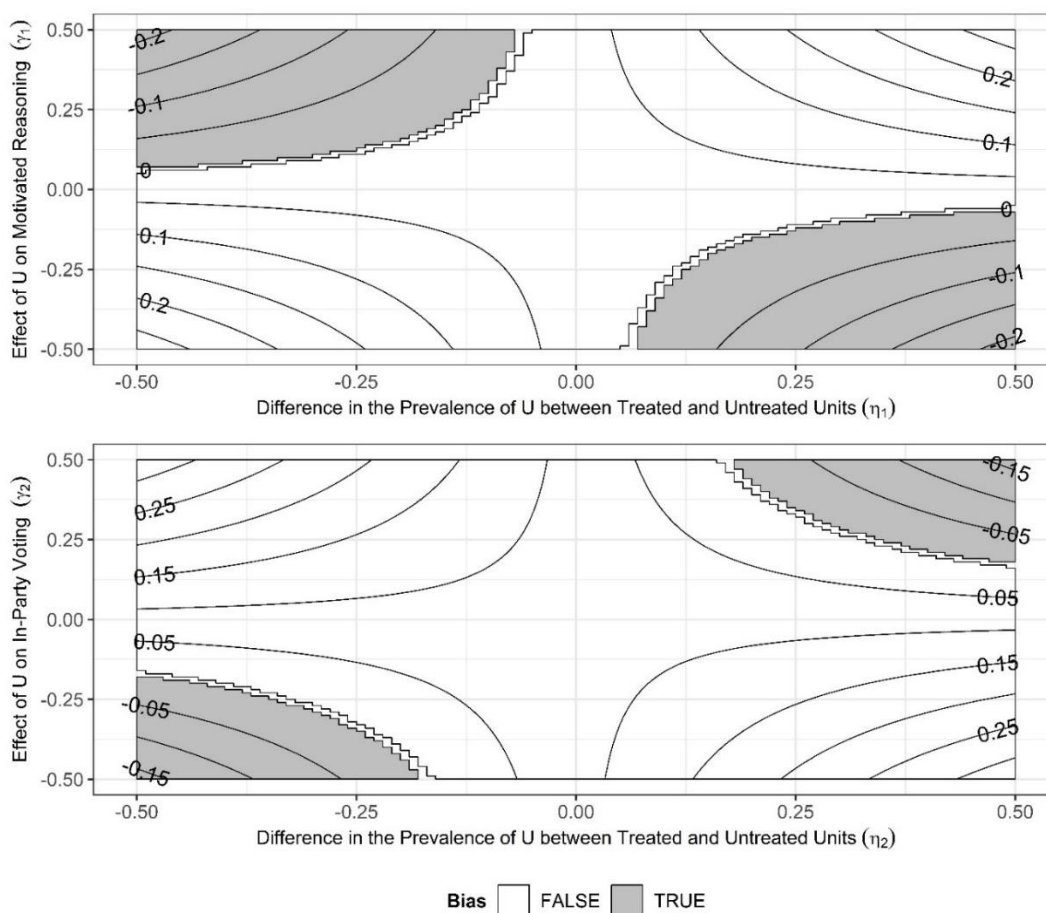
This chapter makes an empirical effort to identify causal mechanisms through expressive and instrumental attachments. Based on Zhou and Yamamoto (2023), the selected methodology enables identifying multi-mediators without assuming that these mediators are independent. This is fundamental for the TMP. For the first mediator (M_1), I select expressive attachment since this type of attachment is expected to have changed after group-based appeals. This mediator is supposed to impact instrumental attachments (M_2), as many studies suggest evaluations follow identity, but rarely the opposite (e.g., Lebo & Cassino, 2007; Dancey & Goren, 2010; cf. Highton & Kam, 2011).

A sensitivity analysis assesses whether this path-specific estimation is sensitive to confounding factors. In the chapter, I show that the estimation for affective polarization is somewhat susceptible. However, I introduced two covariates (i.e., political involvement and group affect) to show how sensitive the PSE for polarization needs to be to overturn the substantive conclusions. In sum, I found that the unobserved confounder has to be more extreme than the bias-adjusted estimates, which suggests that it would be rare. The sensitivity analysis for the specific outcome suggests robustness to confoundedness.

Here, I complete the sensitivity analyses for the two remaining outcomes: motivated reasoning and in-party voting. Unlike the PSE for polarization, I did not measure a potential confounder to behaviour “as if” an observed confounder between mediator and outcome. Figure O1 displays Bias-adjusted Estimates of the PSE of each outcome. For motivated reasoning, I examine the sensitivity of the targeting effect through attachments. For in-party voting, I investigate the sensitivity of the confoundedness of the direct effect. In both cases, I allow the parameters to vary from -0.5 to 0.5 with a step size of 0.01. The boundaries

between the areas with different colours suggest combining unobserved confounders with the outcome and manipulation that would reverse the sign of the estimated effect of in-targeting on motivated reasoning through attachments and the estimated effect of in-targeting on in-party voting. As shown below, the combination does not have to be extreme to change the conclusions in the top panel (motivated reasoning) relative to the bottom panel (in-party voting). This suggests a stronger sensitivity to confoundedness of the estimated indirect effect on reasoning compared to the estimated direct effect on voting.

Figure O1: Bias-adjusted Estimates of the PSE on Motivated Reasoning and Voting



Notes: Based on Zhou and Yamamoto (2023), the contours represent the bias-adjusted estimates of the effect through partisanship plotted as a function of $-\gamma_1\eta_1$ and $\gamma_2\eta_2$ parameters. The grey area shows the values of γ_1 and η_1 that would reverse the sign of the $A \rightarrow M_1 \rightsquigarrow Y_2$. In the second panel, the grey area displays the values of γ_2 and η_2 that would reverse the sign of the $A \rightarrow Y_3$.

Curriculum Vitae

Alvaro J. Pereira Filho

Education

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2025 | Ph.D. in Political Science
University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada |
| 2017 | Master of Arts, Political Science
University of Brasília
Brasília, Distrito Federal, Brazil |
| 2012 | Bachelor of Arts, Political Science
University of Brasília
Brasília, Distrito Federal, Brazil |

Publications

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

- [5] Baker, M.; Pereira Filho, A. J.; Galipeau, T.; & Friesen, A. (2025). Affective Language in the Most Important Issues of the 2019 and 2021 Canadian Election Studies. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 37(2), edaf012.
- [4] Pereira Filho, A. J.; Stephenson, L. B.; & Turgeon, M. (2024). Loyalties and Interests: How Political Motivations Influence Voters' Responses to Scandals. *Electoral Studies*, 89, 102792.
- [3] Pereira Filho, A. J.; & Vidigal, R. (2024). O Menor dos Males? Identidade Partidária e Ambivalência no Eleitorado Brasileiro. *Opinião Pública*, 29 (3), 638-665.
- [2] Zajacova, A.; Pereira Filho, A. J.; Limani, M.; Grol-Prokopczyk, H.; Scherbakov, D.; Fillingim, R.; Hayward, M.; Gilron, I.; & Macfarlane, G. (2023). Self-reported pain treatment practices among U.S. and Canadian adults: Findings from a population survey. *Innovation in Aging*, 7(10), igad103.
- [1] Vidigal, R.; & Pereira Filho, A. J. (2017). Educação e conhecimento político: duas faces de uma mesma moeda ou moedas diferentes? *Em Tese*, vol 14(1), 172-195.

Peer-Reviewed Reports

- [1] Pereira Filho, A. J.; & Stephenson, L. B. (2024). The 2019 Canadian Election Study: A Mode Comparison in Electoral Studies. *C-Dem Report*.

Book Chapters

[1] Masson, Pedro; & Pereira Filho, A. J. (2021). Opinião Pública. In *Guia Brasileiro de Análise de Dados* (pp. 231-251). ENAP.

Funding & Awards

Internal Funding

- 2024 Dr. Harold D. Clarke Graduate Quantitative Research Methodology Fellowship - \$5,000.00.
- Centre for the Study of Political Behaviour Graduate Fellowship (CPSB) - \$ 500.00.
- Graduate Research Awards Fund (GRAF) with Tyler Romualdi and Axel Déry - \$10,000.00.
- 2023 Research, Training and Development Fund (RTDF) - \$1,300.00.
- 2022 Samuel Clark Research Grant with Laura Stephenson (PI) - \$5,000.00
- Graduate Research Awards Fund (GRAF) - \$750.00.

External Funding

- 2025-2027 Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) – Postdoctoral Fellowship.
- 2016-2017 Federal District Research Support Foundation (FAP-DF).

Presentations

Invited Talks

- 2024 UdeM Seminar Series
Université de Montréal.
- Centre for the Study of Political Behaviour (CSPB)
University of Western Ontario.

Workshop

- 2024 C-Dem Junior Scholar Workshop
University of Toronto.

Toronto Political Behaviour Workshop
University of Toronto.

2023 Political Behaviour and Public Opinion Workshop
University of Brasilia, Brazil.

Conferences

2024 Canadian Political Science Association (CPSA)
McGill University.

2023 International Society of Political Psychology (ISPP)
Montreal, Canada.

American Political Science Association (APSA)
Montreal, Canada.

Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA)
Chicago, USA.

2022 MapleMeth Conference
London, Canada.

Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA)
Chicago, USA.

2015 Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Social Sciences.
Caxambú, Brazil.

Teaching Experience

Instructor

2024 Research Design in Political Science
University of Western Ontario.

2023 Research Design in Political Science
University of Western Ontario.

2022 Research Design in Political Science
University of Western Ontario.

2018 Introduction to R
Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological
Development (CNPq), Brazil.

Communication and Society
University of Brasilia, Brazil.

Teaching Assistant

2023 Data Science for Political Science
University of Western Ontario.

2022 Method 2: Regression and Causal Inference (Ph.D. level)
University of Western Ontario.

Method 1: Introduction to Quantitative Methods (Ph.D. level)
University of Western Ontario.

2019 Research Design in Political Science
University of Western Ontario.

2017 Quantitative Methods
University of Brasilia, Brazil.

2011 Political Parties and Electoral Systems
University of Brasilia, Brazil.

Referee

Canadian Journal of Political Science (CJPS).

Languages

PORTUGUESE (native)

ENGLISH (fluent)

SPANISH (advanced)