

**PRESIDENT ON HONEYMOON: AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION,  
MEDIA CONSUMPTION, AND ELECTIONS**

by  
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**PRESIDENT ON HONEYMOON: AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION,  
MEDIA CONSUMPTION, AND ELECTIONS**

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## ABSTRACT

### PRESIDENT ON HONEYMOON: AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION, MEDIA CONSUMPTION, AND ELECTIONS

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During the last decades, studies of polarization have shown that polarization between political groups has been increasing and becoming a chronic problem. Despite the growing number of studies on the relationship between polarization and elections, there are few studies separating winners and losers in their designs. In this thesis, I evaluate how affective polarization levels of election winners and losers change after elections by employing the American National Election Study time series surveys for six different elections. The empirical analyses show that election losers become less polarized and election winners become more polarized after elections in the United States. This change is mainly coming from the increased feeling for the (newly) elected President for both groups. Moreover, this effect is conditional on consuming high levels of political content in media. However, the context of the elections, and the differences in campaigns and candidates have different influences on this effect. This counterintuitive finding offers valuable insights into addressing the issue of polarization.

## ÖZET

DUYGUSAL KUTUPLAŞMA, MEDYA TÜKETİMİ VE SEÇİMLER

ALPEREN ŞEN

SİYASET BİLİMİ YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ, TEMMUZ 2024

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Kutuplaşma üzerine çalışan araştırmacılar, son yıllarda siyasi gruplar arasındaki kutuplaşmanın giderek arttığını ve kronik bir sorun haline geldiğini ortaya koymuştur. Kutuplaşma ve seçimler arasındaki ilişkiye dair artan sayıda çalışma olmasına rağmen, seçimin kazananlarını ve kaybedenlerini ayrı ayrı inceleyen çok az çalışma vardır. Bu tezde, altı farklı seçim için Amerikan National Election Study anket çalışmalarını kullanarak seçimi kazananların ve kaybedenlerin duygusal kutuplaşma düzeylerinin seçimin etkisiyle değiştiğini inceledik. Yapılan regresyon analizleri, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde seçimlerden sonra seçimi kaybedenlerin duygusal olarak daha az kutuplaştığını ve seçimi kazananların daha fazla kutuplaştığını göstermektedir. Bu değişim temel olarak her iki grup için de seçilen başkana yönelik yapılan daha olumlu değerlendirmeden kaynaklanmaktadır. Ayrıca, bu bulgu, yüksek düzeyde siyasi medya içeriği tüketen kişiler için koşullu olarak geçerlidir. Ancak seçimlerin gerçekleştiği koşullar, kampanya farklılıkları ve bireysel farklılıklar bu sonucu farklı şekillerde etkilemektedir. Bu bulgular, kutuplaşma sorununun ele alınmasına yönelik değerli bilgiler sunmaktadır.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

We live in an era of increasing polarization between political rivals and citizens. This polarization occurs not only in the form of political opinions, i.e. ideological polarization, but also in the form of emotions, i.e. affective polarization. Affective polarization is defined as “the tendency of [partisan] people to view opposing partisans negatively and copartisans positively” (Iyengar and Westwood 2015, 691). It indicates that the distance between different political groups is not only happening at the ideological level and opinions. Rather, highly polarized people view opposing partisans as others and put a significant distance between them. When emotions are at play, the risk to democracy can escalate as well, as individuals become attached to their specific group at a deeper level. For example, highly polarized partisans are likely to be against democratic constitutional protections of their opposing partisans (Kingzette et al. 2021).

Even though the main focus of this thesis, affective polarization, is about emotions, it is still a highly political term since it is the affective polarization of partisans. To be affectively polarized requires some sort of belonging to one specific political group while opposing its rival(s). The elections, on the other hand, are one of the intense political periods resulting in a surge of affective polarization (Hernández, Anduiza, and Rico 2021). Besides being held every few years, making them more intense, they determine who is going to rule the country, state, or municipality, for the next few years. Therefore, they determine which group will be the winner and which group(s) will be the loser(s) for the next few years. The importance of the relationship between the elections and affective polarization is twofold. In the pre-election period, the voters see very intense political campaigns with politicians blaming, undermining, and antagonizing the other group(s)’ elites and voters. In the post-election period, one group assumes office and declares victory, while the other group(s) has to wait for at least a few years to (re)gain power. Therefore, the election results should influence the winners and losers differently.

In this thesis, I argue that the elections impact the affective polarization levels of

the election winners and losers differently because the outcome and aftermath of the elections are very different for them. Winners enjoy winning a “life-and-death struggle” and accessing the power for the next term, strengthening their commitment to their parties while knowing that the majority of those who voted are on their side. Even if they voted for the sake of not electing the opposite candidate, the result should give those winners at least a feeling of relief and even a positive increase in their view of the candidate they voted for. The losers, on the other hand, might feel discouraged, disheartened, and devastated after losing such a “life-and-death struggle.” They might begin to voice some of their, maybe suppressed, negative opinions about their parties or the candidate they voted for.

We see this difference between the election winners and losers most clearly in terms of democratic satisfaction as winners are more satisfied with the current system and democracy than losers (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Anderson and Tverdova 2001; Blais and Gélinau 2007; Singh, Karakoç, and Blais 2012). However, to my knowledge, there are very few studies investigating the relationship between the elections and affective polarization by differentiating winner and loser voters.

To this end, I employ non-interactive and interactive OLS regressions applied to individual-level data on six elections in the United States in the second chapter. The data are composed of six election surveys by the American National Election Studies (ANES), which cover all elections between 2000 and 2020. In all the ANES surveys in this study, the respondents are asked to rate their feelings towards the presidential candidates both before and after the election. The time-series structures of the surveys enable us to calculate the change in the respondents’ affective polarization towards the presidential candidates with the election result. The dependent variable is the subtraction of the pre-election polarization level from the post-election polarization level of the respondents with the main independent variable being either a winner or loser.

Counterintuitively, I find that winners, on average, become more polarized after the election; whereas losers become less polarized, controlling for age, gender, ideological extremity, household income, having a college degree, the mode of the interviews, and the election closeness expectation. This means that winning an election is, in general, a polarizing source, whereas losing an election decreases polarization level. The change for both groups comes from their increased feeling toward the newly or re-elected president. This finding can be explained by the honeymoon effect as newly elected presidents enjoy much higher approval rates in the first few months of their term (Miyazaki et al. 2023; Segatti, Poletti, and Vezzoni 2015). However, I also find that the context in which the election took place, and the differences

in electoral campaigns and presidential candidates lead to different outcomes in different election years.

I chose the United States as my case study “because partisanship means identifying with the Democrat group or the Republican group” in the country (Iyengar et al. 2019, 130). There are no other mass partisan groups. In-group favoritism for one group easily turns into out-group derogation for the other group. The huge majority of the voters will be either winners or losers as Duverger (1954) famously points out that single-member plurality rule elections favor two parties. This feature of American politics and society enables us to measure our theoretical expectations more easily. Although affective polarization level in the United States is not significantly higher than that in Western societies, it remains at a concerning level (Gidron, Adams, and Horne 2020). The January 6, 2021 attack on the United States Capitol building can be regarded as one of the outcomes of the high polarization level in the country.

In the third chapter, I explore a possible mechanism for this counterintuitive finding by analyzing three different variables: partisanship strength, the distance of the survey date from the election date, and media consumption. I argue that strong partisans should be much more affected by the election result than others as their loyalty and commitment to their party is higher than the moderates. For example, a leaning partisan might hate the opposing candidate, yet it is not enough to make them a strong partisan. A strong partisan values its party higher than others, in addition to not liking, or hating, the opposing candidate in a polarized environment. As affective polarization is twofold, e.g. rating towards the favored party/candidate minus the rating towards the opposed party/candidate, strong partisans should be more polarized than other partisans since they regard their party higher. Therefore, the election result should affect strong partisans more than other partisans as I expect a conditional effect of strong partisanship on the affective polarization change. To this end, I employ an OLS regression model, interacting partisanship with winners (losers). According to the ANES surveys, there are three different partisanship categories: strong partisanship, weak partisanship, and leaning partisanship. Although I find that partisanship does not moderate the relationship between the winner status and affective polarization change after the election, there is a significant difference between strong partisans and the other partisans within the winner and loser groups separately. On average, strong partisan losers become much less polarized than weak and leaning partisan losers; whereas leaning and weak partisan winners become more polarized than strong partisan winners after the election.

Another possible explanation for our main finding could be the survey date. Hernán-

dez, Anduiza, and Rico (2021) argue that affective polarization increases as elections gain salience, meaning that the timing of the survey can affect the polarization level. According to this account, the closer the survey date to the election date, the more the respondent is likely to express a higher affective polarization level as the elections gain more salience and the campaigning period becomes more intensified. For this, I calculate the weekly distance of the survey interview date to the election date for both the pre-election and post-election surveys.<sup>1</sup> I employ an OLS regression model, interacting the weekly distance of the survey timing with the winner status. I do not find a conditional effect of the survey timing on the outcome.

Lastly, I analyze the effect of media consumption for our main finding. Except for the 2020 study, I find that our main finding is present only for those who highly consume political content on national television, those who watch national news 4-7 days a week. Perhaps due to the difference in the question wording, and the question being asked after the election only in 2020, we do not observe the same effect in the 2020 study. These results suggest that polarized political environments further fuel polarization as partisans feed themselves with co-partisan-favored information. Cakmak (2023) argues that election losers prefer to stay away from political content as it is disappointing for them, which might be the reason for the losers' decrease in affective polarization in our finding.

This thesis will be helpful in our understanding of how elections affect winners and losers differently and in efforts to reduce polarization in the long term. Even though the losers' increased feelings towards the opposite candidate, the (new) President, might be temporary, or at a small scale, they become less polarized for a few months anyway. This suggests that affective polarization is not constantly rising, and there are periods when partisans feel a bit more closer to and tolerant of the opposing candidate. If the newly or re-elected president can work on further improving its relations with opposing partisans, the elections might be a new beginning for efforts to depolarize the country. Considering that citizen polarization follows party polarization (Moral and Best 2023) and that the leader polarization is higher than the party polarization in the United States (Reiljan et al. 2024), this effort initiated by the president could pass on to its voters as well despite we find that election winners become more polarized. As their rating towards the candidate they voted for increased, such an initiative by the president might make them feel closer to the opposing partisans.

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<sup>1</sup>I could not add the 2012 study in this model because I could not identify the survey date for some of the respondents due to different waves.



## 2. AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION AND ELECTIONS

Affective polarization is “the tendency of [partisan] people to view opposing partisans negatively and copartisans positively” (Iyengar and Westwood 2015, 691). Rather than ideological polarization, which refers to the divergence in ideological and political issues, affective polarization is more about the divergence in one’s emotions and feelings toward political camps. Therefore, it is still a political term since it requires having feelings towards different political groups. Rather than being different at the ideological level or political issues, it is more about how one feels towards these groups who hold specific issue agendas. As the definition above points out, it requires some sort of belonging, even if it means only voting, to one specific political group, which is called partisanship.

Partisanship leads to two main attitudes: in-group favoritism and out-group derogation (Greene 2004). Associating with a political party, partisanship, creates a distinction between the in-group and out-group (Tajfel and Turner 1979). Moreover, this distinction leads to in-group bias and out-group discrimination (Carlin and Love 2013; Iyengar and Westwood 2015), and both of them can further increase polarization. One, who highly likes a specific party but is neutral towards the rival party, is as polarized as one, who is neutral towards a party but is hateful towards the rival party. Positive feelings towards the supported party and co-partisans are the initial element of affective polarization, which is followed by negative feelings towards other parties and their supporters (Wagner 2021). Being affectively polarized means adopting a mindset of division between “us“ and “them“ within the political sphere (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012).

Scholars have been long interested in explaining the increase or decrease in affective polarization and the causes of this change. Negative partisanship has been on the rise in the United States since the 1980s (Abramowitz and Webster 2016). In 2012, 74 percent of the US respondents reported their dislike towards an opposing party (Abramowitz and Webster 2016, 16). Partisans’ feelings towards their co-partisans have grown more positive in the United States as well (Robison and Moskowitz

2019). These two aspects increase polarization as the distance between the favored party and the disliked party is widening. Individuals, in general, are more loyal to a particular party than they were in the past, which means they also dislike the other parties more than they used to. In short, we live in a more affectively polarized environment than in the past (Phillips 2022).

Elections are one of the crucial events that influence the affective polarization level. Their outcome determines who is going to rule the country, state, or municipality for the next term. The winners will stay winners and have access to power and resources for a few years, whereas the losers have much less means in the same sense, especially if the political regime does not allow coalitions. The losers have to wait, at least, for a few (more) years to (re-)access power and resources while the opposite group governs them.

However, there is little scholarly attention to the relationship between affective polarization and election results based on how it differs for winners and losers. Janssen (2024) argues the effect of election-winning (losing) on political support is much stronger for highly-polarized voters. Sheffer (2020), on the other hand, explores how winner and loser partisans' in-group bias levels change after the elections.

In the pre-election period in the United States, the Democrat and Republican presidential candidates are about the same likely to assume the office, or at least the expectations are not hugely on one side, apart from re-elections. The transfer of power is a tradition in the United States politics. Therefore, both partisan groups enter the elections with the hope of winning the election. The electoral campaign periods last quite intense in the United States. The period starts months before the election and gets increasingly intense as the election approaches. Individuals' partisanship levels rise before elections and fall after them as their influence diminishes (Michelitch and Utych 2018; Singh and Thornton 2019), showing the political intensity of the period. During the election campaign periods, individuals' tolerance towards co-partisans increases whereas tolerance towards out-group members decreases (Hansen and Kosiara-Pedersen 2017), further fueling affective polarization as tolerance is about emotions. In line with this, affective polarization increases towards elections (Bassan-Nygate and Weiss 2022); and declines after elections as they lose salience (Hernández, Anduiza, and Rico 2021). The increase in negative election campaigning and increased exposure to negative campaigns also fuels affective polarization (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012; Nai and Maier N.d.).

Moreover, parties now try to mobilize their bases instead of trying to persuade the independents or swing voters (Panagopoulos 2016). Due to polarization and increasing partisan attachments, and therefore a decrease in swing voters, whichever side

brings more of their voters to the ballot box would win the election. This focus on microtargeting and base mobilization started mainly with the 2000 Republican campaign (Panagopoulos 2016), and increased the canvassing efforts (Beck and Heidemann 2014). We can infer that this method is more polarizing than persuasion, as parties target their bases and try to mobilize them politically. To have them take political action, such as voting, parties try to appeal to their voters' emotions, increasing polarization. In fact, high levels of polarization increase the voters' propensities to turn out to vote (Moral 2017).

Therefore, the intensity of the election campaign periods, in which politicians mostly blame and antagonize the other group(s), should increase the affective polarization level before the election, and as it ends, this effect should fade out. Moreover, some factors that could lead to a decrease in polarization during the election process, such as collaboration between political parties (Adams, Gidron, and Horne 2023; Bassan-Nygate and Weiss 2022), are unlikely to be realized in the United States due to its majoritarian system.

In the aftermath of the election, this intensity in an effort to win the seat disappears. Therefore, polarization decreases to some extent after elections. Sheffer (2020) argues that out-group discrimination explains the decrease in polarization after elections better than co-partisan favoritism. Similarly, Hernández, Anduiza, and Rico (2021, 6) suggest that the decrease in affective polarization after elections "is driven both by an improvement in the evaluations of the least liked parties, as well as a reduction in the extent to which respondents evaluate positively the party they like the most."

Meanwhile, the two groups, winners and losers, do not remain the same as during the pre-election period when both expected to win apart from re-elections. One group is declared the winner against the other. One group will have access to power and resources, and rule the country, state, or municipality for the next few years. The winners think that the majority of those who voted are on their side, further bolstering their commitment, loyalty, and support to their party. They are more satisfied with the regime and democracy than losers as it serves them right (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Anderson and Tverdova 2001; Blais and Gélinau 2007; Singh, Karakoç, and Blais 2012). Moreover, the impact of winning an election persists over time and has a lasting effect on satisfaction with democracy (Dahlberg and Linde 2017; Loveless 2021; Nemčok and Wass 2021).

The losers feel less satisfied with the way democracy works in their country because their preference is not held by the majority. Losers have to stand the policies and partisans of their disliked party for a certain period of time, at least until the next

election. When individuals have a strong and emotional attachment to their political parties, their partisanship resembles the support for a sports team. After the loss of their team in a match against a rivalry, the supporters became heartbroken and devastated for a few days. This effect lasts longer when they lose a championship. However, there is another match in a few days or a new season in a few months, providing an opportunity to alleviate the intensity of this pessimistic feeling. In politics, losers have to wait for a few years if there will be no snap election. In the United States, losers have to wait for at least four years to recompute for the office. The midterm elections might provide satisfaction in between two presidential elections, but the latter is more significant for citizens, considering the lower turnout rates in the former, as the presidency is the highest office in the United States.

Therefore, I expect a different impact of election outcome on affective polarization change, regarding winners and losers. On the one hand, the disappearance of election salience is expected to decrease affective polarization. This should be true for all voters as elections lose their salience almost equally for everyone over time.

Nevertheless, I expect that the winner/loser status' effect on affective polarization will not be the same for all voters. Losers will be heartbroken and devastated and have to wait for at least 4 years to get the reward of winning. Psychologically, losses loom larger than gains (Tversky and Kahneman 1991, 1992). According to this theory, losses are emotionally and psychologically more powerful than gains, therefore people seek to avoid losses.

Additionally, considering the high polarization level, losers see those whom they dislike or even hate winning the election. The influence of losing an election is more prominent in majoritarian systems as the loser party/candidate is less able to influence politics compared to consensual democracies (Anderson and Guillory 1997). For this reason, I expect an increase in losers' affective polarization after the elections. I expect this increase in polarization to be driven by a decrease in the feeling score toward the out-party candidate, who is the winner.

Winners, on the other hand, might feel the joy of winning and this can increase their feeling score towards their party, the candidate they vote for, and co-partisans. They hold office for at least one term, have access to power, and ability to influence politics at the highest level. Moreover, the candidate they dislike, even perhaps hate, is not elected. The winning would refresh their support and loyalty to their party. At least, the winners' feeling towards their candidate would not dramatically decrease. Losers, on the other hand, might feel somehow dissociated from their party, at least temporarily.

Nonetheless, I expect losers to be more polarized than winners after the election as I think that the former’s disappointment would be more powerful than the joy and satisfaction of winners. Because winners are composed of different segments, who might vote for a candidate not because of their love for the winning candidate, but because of their dislike, or even hate, towards the other candidate (Abramowitz and Webster 2018). Although losers are also composed of different segments, they lose the office and their chance to influence the policies almost completely when they lose. Winners can still influence the policies of their party even though they do not value the winning candidate highly. Therefore, this part of my argument takes the following form:

**H1:** *Losers become more affectively polarized after elections than winners.*

In an attempt to find a possible causal mechanism, the relationship between affective polarization and election outcome conditional on a) partisanship, b) survey timing, and c) media consumption, and their theoretical relevance will be unfolded in the next chapter.

## 2.1 Data and Research Design

The data employed in this chapter are composed of 6 time-series election studies of the American National Election Studies (ANES), which cover all elections between 2000 and 2020. The Democratic and Republican parties each won 3 of these elections. The challenger party’s candidate won 4 of these elections, which are the 2000, 2008, 2016, and 2020 elections. Most of the respondents are interviewed before and after elections in the ANES studies (2017; 2021; 2016; 2015; 2016; 2016), enabling us to measure the change in affective polarization of the same respondents with the influence of the election result. The ANES data are one of the most comprehensive electoral studies focusing on the United States, allowing us to use pre- and after-election measures. Despite some concerns over a possible “artificial increase” in affective polarization levels due to its mixed methods (face-to-face and online), it is still considered a robust source for measuring polarization (Tyler and Iyengar N.d.).

In all ANES studies used here, the respondents are asked to rate their feelings towards the presidential candidates, as ratings between 0 and 50 mean not feeling favorable, and ratings between 50 and 100 mean feeling favorable with 50 being neutral. This measure enables us to capture the emotion level that the respondents

feel towards a particular candidate.

I calculate affective polarization as the difference between the feeling score given to the candidate that the respondent voted for and the feeling score given to the opposing candidate (Iyengar et al. 2019, 131).

The dependent variable in all models, the change in affective polarization, is continuous and can potentially range between -200 and 200. The following formula is used to calculate the change in affective polarization:<sup>2</sup>

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \text{ Affective Polarization} = & (\text{Post-election feeling score for voted candidate} \\ & - \text{Post-election feeling score for opposite candidate}) \\ & - (\text{Pre-election feeling score for voted candidate} \\ & - \text{Pre-election feeling score for opposite candidate}). \end{aligned}$$

The main independent variable is the winner status, which is binary, and scores 1 for the respondents who voted for the winning candidate. However, previous studies suggest that some loser voters may report that they voted for the winning candidate in a survey conducted after elections (Carsey and Jackson 2001; Mattei 1998; Wright 1993). To overcome this misreport bias, I matched the respondents' pre-election vote intentions with their post-election voting reports.<sup>3</sup>

The ideological extremity variable is the distance of each respondent from the ideological center which intends "to account for the intensity of respondents' ideological views" (Moral 2017, 948).<sup>4</sup> In the studies between 2004 and 2020, respondents are asked to place themselves on a 0-10 left-right scale. The respondents are asked to place themselves on a 1-7 liberal-conservative scale only in the 2000 study in our sample. The 2000 variable is expanded to a 0-10 scale. The family income variable is logged and adjusted for inflation. In addition, I also control for gender as male being 1, and education with a college degree binary variable.

Additionally, I introduce the mode of the interview, and the people's expectations of how close the election race is going to conclude between the candidates. As

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<sup>2</sup>The result of the same models calculated with absolute values is provided in Appendix in Table A.3

<sup>3</sup>This operation, unfortunately, drops those who were undecided about whom to vote. The model only considering respondents' post-election voting reports is presented in Appendix in Table A.3.

<sup>4</sup>Since ideological extremity can be a bad control for influencing the affective polarization level, the same model calculated without this variable is presented in Appendix in Table A.3. Keep also in mind that this control variable comes from post-election interviews, so it could be affected by the election result.

indicated, there are some concerns over a possible “artificial increase” in affective polarization levels due to surveys’ mixed methods (Tyler and Iyengar N.d.). This could potentially influence our dependent variable even though we are not interested in the question of “how polarized the society is,” but rather in “how polarization changes.” Before 2012, all interviews were conducted face-to-face. Meanwhile, the election closeness expectation might also influence the outcome, since the more an election is expected to be closer, the more emotions are heightened. Both of them are binary variables. The categories that include the interviewers during the survey, which are face-to-face, video, telephone, and CASI&face-to-face options, are coded as 0, whereas the Internet option is coded as 1. For the election closeness expectation, 1 indicates that the respondents think the race will be close, whereas 0 indicates that they think that one candidate will win by quite a bit.

Moreover, some of the models include election year fixed effects except the ones where the election year is used as an interaction term with the winner status. Using election year in the interaction term helps us to assess if different elections have different effects on our dependent variable. Partisan identity “generate[s] strong emotional reactions to ongoing campaign events” (Huddy, Mason, and Aarøe 2015, 15). This can suggest that different types of electoral campaigns might generate different influences. It is fair to expect a slightly different influence of Donald Trump’s presidential election campaign compared to Barack Obama’s or Mitt Romney’s campaigns as the former scores higher on the Dark Triad characteristics (narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism) (Nai and Toros 2020). As indicated above, some previous studies suggest that negative campaigning increases affective polarization (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012).

The empirical specification of the main model is as follows with  $\alpha_i$  representing the year fixed-effect:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta\text{Affective Polarization}_{it} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1\text{Winner Status}_{it} + \beta_2\text{Age}_{it} + \beta_3\text{Gender}_{it} \\ & + \beta_4\text{Ideological Extremity}_{it} + \beta_5\text{Family Income}_{it} + \beta_6\text{College Degree}_{it} \\ & + \beta_7\text{Interview Mode}_{it} + \beta_8\text{Election Closeness}_{it} + \alpha_i + \epsilon_{it} \end{aligned}$$

The descriptive statistics of the variables are presented in Appendix in Table A.1. To make a healthy comparison between our main model in this chapter, and the interactive partisanship strength model in the following chapter, I omit 707 non-partisans from the model to have the same sample. The model with non-partisans included is presented in Appendix in Table A.3, and it does not change the statistical

significance and direction of the main model.<sup>5</sup> Since the leaning partisan question additionally asks independents which party they would choose if they had to, the partisanship categories contain a very large proportion of the society. Additionally, taking the partisanship sample into account, introducing the control variables reduces the number of respondents by 1,162, resulting in a final sample size of 11,673 for this thesis.

Table 2.1 Means of Feeling Scores for Both Winner and Loser Candidates Before and After Elections for the Full Sample

<b>Voters</b>	<b><math>\Delta</math>Pol</b>	<b>Pre-feel for winner can.</b>	<b>Post-feel for winner can.</b>	<b>Pre-feel for loser can.</b>	<b>Post-feel for loser can.</b>
Losers	-3.31	17.72	↑ 20.24	80.09	↓ 79.3
Winners	3.24	80.76	↑ 84.73	16.64	↑ 17.37
All	.37	53.17	↑ 56.51	44.40	↑ 44.47

## 2.2 Empirical Findings and Discussion

Table 2.1 presents a general summary of our dependent variable, that is the affective polarization change after the election. In general, the polarization merely increases by 0.37, in a variable that can theoretically range between -200 and 200. Thus, the overall polarization level does not significantly change with the elections. However, there is a difference between winners and losers. For losers, the polarization level decreases by -3.31, whereas it increases by 3.24 for winners. Both of this change mainly comes from the groups' increased feelings toward the newly or re-elected president. The feeling toward the loser candidate, on the other hand, does not change by even 1 point.

The OLS regression estimates on the full sample on the change in affective polarization between before and after elections are reported in Table 2.2. The winners' affective polarization level changes by 6.5 more than the losers' with a standard error of 0.4. Dividing the coefficient of the winning status (6.5) by the standard deviation of the affective polarization change (22.2) results in approximately 0.29. This means that a one-unit change in the winning status results in a change in the

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<sup>5</sup>For the following models in this thesis, I continue to omit the non-partisans as partisanship is at the core of polarization.



affective polarization change that is about 29% of the standard deviation, suggesting that our main independent variable has a relatively strong influence on the outcome.

To put it in context, and to see if the groups' polarization increased or decreased, the marginal effect and coefficient plot is presented in Figure 2.1 with 95% confidence intervals.<sup>6</sup> The plot shows that while winners, on average, significantly become more affectively polarized after elections by around 5 points; losers become less polarized by around 2 points. Therefore, we reject H1 given the statistical and substantive significance of the positive coefficient estimate of the winner status variable in the model. These numbers on a scale between -200 and 200 might seem relatively small, but we have to consider that this is a short-term effect happening within a few months.

Model 1 also shows that younger people are more affected by the election in terms of affective polarization change than older people. Moreover, ideologically extreme people become more affected by the same effect. Table A.7 in Appendix shows that this effect is held when both Republican and Democratic parties' candidates win the election. Table A.6 in Appendix also shows the same effect when both the incumbent candidate and the non-incumbent candidate win the election. However, winning is more effective on the affective polarization change when a non-incumbent candidate wins the election compared to an incumbent being re-elected, showing that winning is more effective on emotions when the party is not in power for a few years.

It should also be noted that 3,006 of respondents' polarization levels do not change after the elections. This is somewhat surprising as these people either recall how they measured the candidates a few weeks after the first interview, or they very precisely rate the candidates with the same distance.

This counterintuitive finding can be explained by the honeymoon effect as newly elected presidents enjoy much higher approval rates in the first few months of their term (Miyazaki et al. 2023; Segatti, Poletti, and Vezzoni 2015). Locander (1979, 267) argues, for example, "At the beginning of a new administration, a traditional honeymoon period is extended to the president by the Congress, the public, and the press." As the election campaign period's intensity fades away and people start to watch politics less often, they might start rating the opposite candidate in a less hostile manner. This should be especially true for the president as they will govern and be the leader of the country for the next term. Moreover, we have to keep in mind that this change in affective polarization is not only influenced by the election results. When the elections are over, the campaigns are also over, meaning that the

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<sup>6</sup>All confidence intervals are calculated at 95% in the models presented in this thesis.

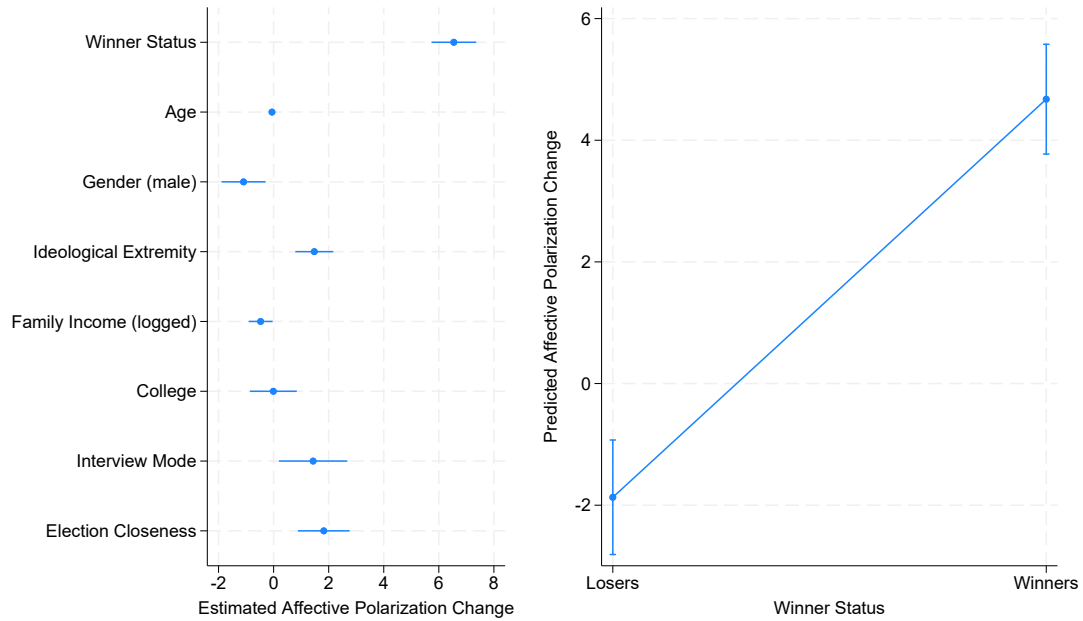
voters are not constantly exposed to party propaganda.

Table 2.2 The Effect of Winner Status on Affective Polarization Change

	Model 1
Winner Status	6.545*** (0.414)
Age	-0.058*** (0.012)
Gender (male)	-1.091*** (0.410)
Ideological Extremity	1.478*** (0.352)
Family Income (logged)	-0.472** (0.223)
College	-0.010 (0.435)
Interview Mode	1.436** (0.634)
Election Closeness Expectation	1.822*** (0.480)
2004	-5.917*** (1.237)
2008	-10.012*** (1.058)
2012	-8.628*** (1.022)
2016	-6.382*** (1.074)
2020	-4.852*** (1.078)
Constant	8.035*** (2.722)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.039
N	11673

Robust standard errors in parentheses.  
The base category for the election year is 2000.  
Two-tailed tests. \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

Figure 2.1 The Coefficient and Marginal Plots of the Effect of Winner Status on Affective Polarization Change



### 2.2.1 Pre-Polarization Levels

Another inquiry can be done to investigate those people who feel more tolerant towards the opposite leaders. Are they the same as those who raided the US Capitol building after Republican candidate Donald Trump refused to accept losing against Joe Biden? Those who raided the building perhaps did not increase their feeling toward the winning candidate, Biden, as they believed that they were not losers. To have a clue, I examine the respondents' polarization level for presidential candidates prior to the election, which is half of our dependent variable. I grouped the respondents into 5 categories. The first one is "Reverse," that is if the respondent feels better towards the candidate that they did not vote for, e.g. a Trump voter who rates Biden better than Trump. The Low category includes the polarization level between 0 and 25 before the election, 2 includes 26/50, 3 includes 51/75, and the High includes 76/100. This variable enables us to see the difference between already highly-polarized voters and low-polarized ones.

Tables 2.3 and 2.4 show the distribution of prior-polarization levels over election losers' and winners' feeling score averages for loser and winner candidates before and after the elections. At the right, the polarization change of prior-polarization level groups is presented. Out of 11,673 observations in our full sample, 36.5 percent is in the highly polarized category, which does not substantively change between winners

and losers. However, only 9.41 percent of the observations were highly polarized before the 2000 election in our sample, whereas this figure was 49.4 percent in 2020.<sup>7</sup> This shows the change of scenery and dramatic increase in polarization in American politics in just two decades.

For losers who were highly polarized before the election, their polarization levels decreased by 9.42 points afterward, largely due to their improved perception of the opposing candidate. Since they were already highly polarized, and at the end of the spectrum, there is no possible room for more polarization for them. After the intensity of the elections fades away, they also get out of the election atmosphere and become less polarized. The same is true for already highly polarized winner voters. Their polarization level also decreases after the election, as they feel better toward the losing candidate. This can also be explained by the “ceiling effect,” those people are already highly polarized, there is no more room for them to be more polarized. This does not mean that they would necessarily become less polarized, but they were perhaps more polarized due to the electoral atmosphere during the campaigns, which partly loses its significance after the election.

These also suggest that people who raided the Capitol building might constitute a small minority even within the highly polarized groups.

Table 2.3 Losers’ Means of Feeling Scores for Winner and Loser Candidates Before and After Elections Depending on Their Prior Polarization Level

<b>Pol level</b>	<b>Pre-feel for winner cand.</b>	<b>Post-feel for winner cand.</b>	<b>Pre-feel for loser cand.</b>	<b>Post-feel for loser cand.</b>	<b>ΔPol</b>
Reverse	59.44	↓ 49.26	43.06	↑ 56.28	23.41
Low	49.58	↓ 45.25	63.55	↑ 66.48	7.26
2	32.17	↓31.19	71.36	↑ 71.62	1.24
3	12.86	↑ 17.02	77.35	↓77.18	-4.33
High	1.54	↑ 7.37	94.01	↓ 90.42	-9.42
Total	17.72	↑ 20.24	80.09	↓79.30	-3.31

<sup>7</sup>Author’s calculation not presented here.

Table 2.4 Winners' Means of Feeling Scores for Winner and Loser Candidates Before and After Elections Depending on Their Prior Polarization Level

<b>Pol level</b>	<b>Pre-feel for winner cand.</b>	<b>Post-feel for winner cand.</b>	<b>Pre-feel for loser cand.</b>	<b>Post-feel for loser cand.</b>	<b><math>\Delta</math>Pol</b>
Reverse	42.64	↑ 69.33	61.44	↓ 43.42	44.72
Low	64.22	↑ 75.19	48.98	↓ 40.82	19.14
2	74.42	↑ 80.24	34.25	↓ 30.05	10.02
3	76.65	↑ 81.98	11.90	↑ 14.09	3.13
High	93.04	↓ 92.50	1.53	↑ 6.42	-5.44
Total	80.76	↑ 84.73	16.64	↑ 17.37	3.24

### 2.2.2 Election Context

The substantive effect of the winner (loser) status on the affective polarization change for each election is plotted in Figures 2.2 and 2.3 with a different model presented in Table 2.5. The model includes the interaction of the election year with the winning status to see the election-based effect. For each election, except 2004 in which George W. Bush got re-elected, the winners are above the losers in terms of affective polarization change. Only in 2000 and 2004 did losers become more polarized after the election. In all other elections in our sample, losers' ratings towards the winning candidate increased, which decreased affective polarization. Our expectation of winners' higher rating towards their candidate is realized, but losers do not show an opposite reaction. The same model with the dependent variable being the polarization change towards the vice presidential candidates is presented in Appendix A.8.

Democrats and Republicans each won three of these elections. In three of these elections, the president's party changed, but unusually, Donald Trump could not enjoy his incumbency advantage in the 2020 election held under the COVID-19 pandemic. In both the 2000 and 2016 elections, the losing Democrat candidates lost the election despite winning the popular vote.

These findings suggest that the context matters as well, as different election campaigns have different impacts on emotions as we expected. Not surprisingly, incumbent wins have a smaller effect on emotions than non-incumbent wins as the continuation of the status quo is mostly expected. The difference between winners and

losers is realized the most in the 2008 election, in which Democrat Barack Obama beat Republican John McCain in a result “neither especially close nor particularly large when set in historical perspective” (Campbell 2009, 1).

Figure 2.2 The Marginal Effect of Winner Status on Affective Polarization Change Based on Election Year

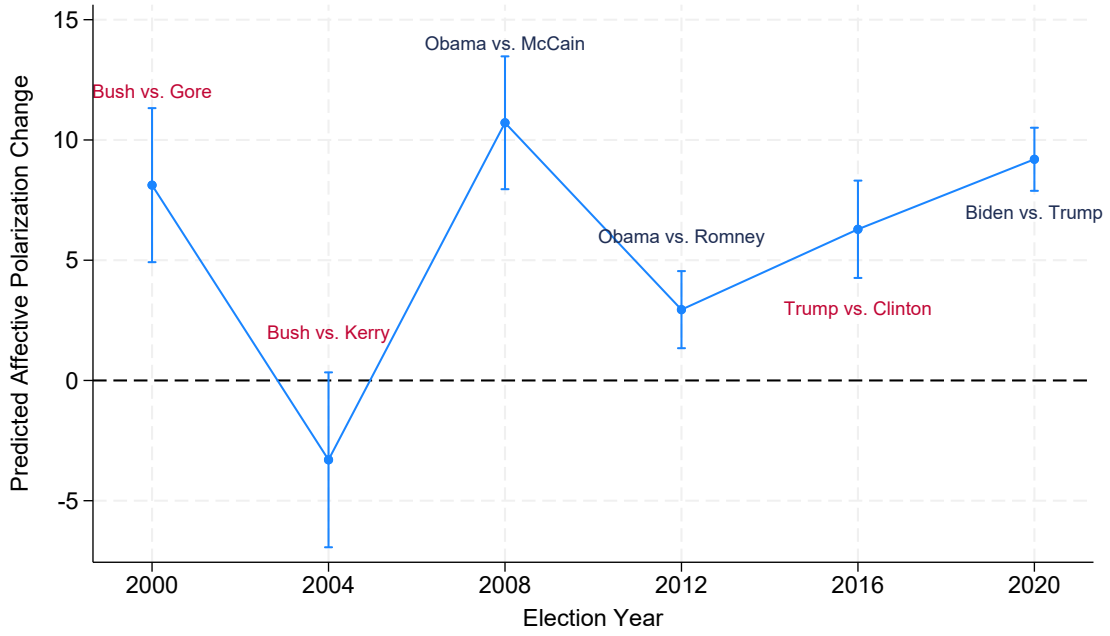


Figure 2.3 The Effect of Winner Status on Affective Polarization Change Based on Election Year

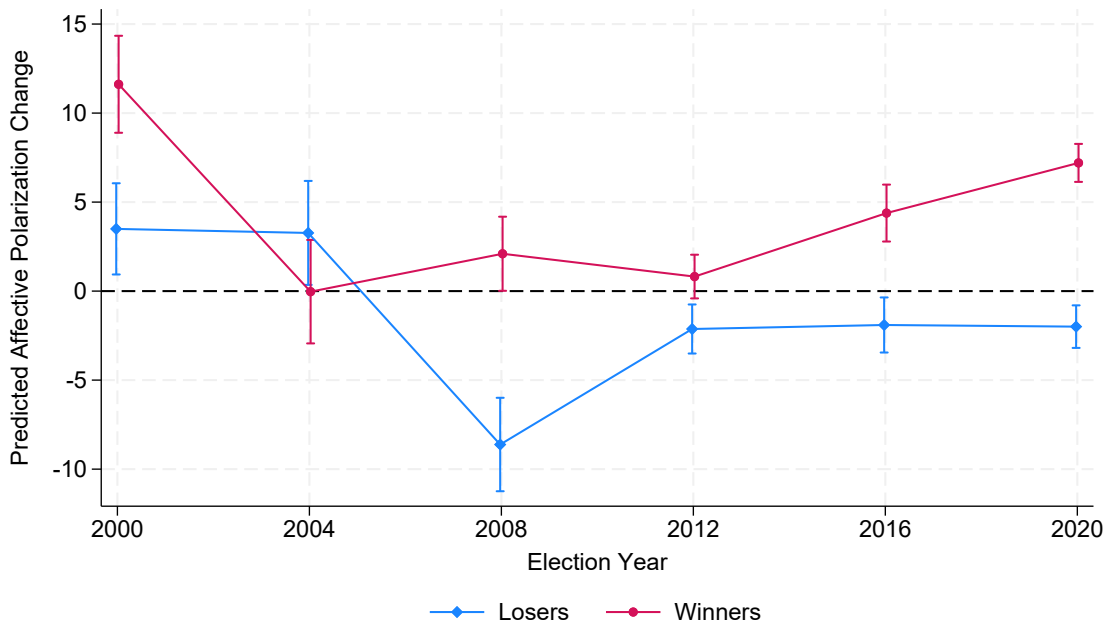


Table 2.5 OLS Regression on Affective Polarization Change

	Model 2
Winner Status	8.121*** (1.633)
2004	-0.227 (1.721)
2008	-12.113*** (1.594)
2012	-5.623*** (1.367)
2016	-5.399*** (1.394)
2020	-5.491*** (1.370)
2004 × Winner Status	-11.421*** (2.470)
2008 × Winner Status	2.594 (2.160)
2012 × Winner Status	-5.177*** (1.829)
2016 × Winner Status	-1.835 (1.931)
2020 × Winner Status	1.076 (1.766)
Constant	7.178** (2.794)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.045
N	11673
Controls	✓

Robust standard errors in parentheses.  
The base category for the election year is 2000.  
Two-tailed tests. \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

Table 2.6 shows the winner and loser groups' feeling changes for both candidates in the 2008 election. Both winner and loser citizens had a better feeling toward the United States' first black president, Obama, after the election, who enjoyed around a 6-point improvement overall. Interestingly, Republicans' rating toward their candidate, McCain, decreased by around 3 points. Democrats on the other hand felt

better towards him. This difference can be due to McCain’s personality and political stance, who was “unusually” central compared to other Republican presidential candidates (Campbell 2009, 1). This could have led more radical Republicans to favor him a little bit less, and Democrats to favor him more after an electoral loss.

Table 2.6 Means of Feeling Scores for Both Winner and Loser Candidates Before and After the 2008 Election

Voters	$\Delta$ Pol	Pre-feel for	Post-feel for	Pre-feel for	Post-feel for
		Obama	Obama	McCain	McCain
Rep	-11.00	30.89	↑38.76	75.10	↓ 71.97
Dem	0.62	83.75	↑ 89.90	35.68	↑ 41.21
Total	-3.24	66.19	↑ 72.91	48.77	↑ 51.43

Initially, the race between Obama and McCain was expected to be close. The Democratic base unified behind Obama later in the campaign, who were mainly competing with Hillary Clinton (Birnbaum 2008). After the Wall Street crisis in September, the race turned in favor of Obama with incumbent Bush having low approval rates due to the economy and the Iraq War (Campbell 2009).

Obama built his campaign around hope and change, which directly aim emotions. There were many factors to influenced voters’ emotions in 2008, such as “the long and bitter history of racism in America, the anger and fear many Americans felt over the war and the economy, and the pervasive theme of hope promoted by the Obama campaign” (Finn and Glaser 2010, 263). Breaking some racial prejudices, Obama’s address of hope and change might have appealed to the Republican voters as well in times of economic turmoil. Strikingly, the Republicans’ feeling rating toward Obama increased more than the Democrats’ feeling rating increase toward him after the election, perhaps due to both Obama’s campaign and McCain’s more central political stance.

Another question is why we see a smaller difference between winners and losers in terms of affective polarization change in 2016 than in 2008. According to Table 2.7, voters are much more polarized towards the presidential candidates in 2016. Perhaps with the lack of a central figure, more negative campaigns, and higher levels of polarization, voters already hate the out-group candidates before the election. In the 2016 campaign, both Trump and Clinton personally attacked the other, with the former constantly mocking and name-calling the latter (Sides et al. 2022). This higher polarization might have diminished the honeymoon effect.



In 2008, Obama enjoyed around 8 points better rating by the other group, Republicans, after the election, whereas this figure is around 4 for Trump. In fact, in the 2016 campaign, much more negative political ads were aired than in the 2020 campaign (Sides et al. 2022). Even though this figure is higher in 2012 than in 2016 according to the same source, Obama’s continuation of incumbency perhaps reduced this difference between winners and losers.

Table 2.7 Means of Feeling Scores for Both Winner and Loser Candidates Before and After the 2016 Election

<b>Voters</b>	<b><math>\Delta</math>Pol</b>	<b>Pre-feel for Trump</b>	<b>Post-feel for Trump</b>	<b>Pre-feel for Clinton</b>	<b>Post-feel for Clinton</b>
Dem	-3.02	6.73	↑ 10.80	75.80	↑ 76.84
Rep	3.04	74.37	↑ 79.10	9.99	↑ 11.68
Total	-0.25	37.67	↑ 42.04	45.70	↑ 47.04

The 2020 campaign was again shaped by a crisis, this time the Covid-19 pandemic. Even though we again saw mutual targeting and attacks between Trump and Biden, and the former name-calling the latter, the campaign was mainly shaped around recovering from the pandemic (Sides et al. 2022). The Democrats might have enjoyed the joy and relief of getting rid of Donald Trump, a highly polarizing figure, in times of crisis, thus leading to a higher difference between winners and losers than in 2016.

The only anomaly seems to be the 2004 election in which the winners are not statistically significant from the losers in terms of our outcome. Although there are some concerns about the election’s integrity at a level bordering on conspiracy theories (Kennedy Jr 2006), the 2000 election is also famous for its controversial ballot paper design used in Palm Beach County, Florida, which might led to Democrat candidate Al Gore’s defeat (Foley 2024; Sinclair et al. 2000). The losers become more polarized, and the winners become less polarized in 2004 as opposed to the other elections.

The 2004 election was mainly shaped by the Iraq War, which further polarized the voters (Campbell 2004). Table 2.8 shows that Republicans already highly favored Bush before the election, perhaps due to rally around the flag effect of the Iraq War, so we do not see an important increase in his rating with the election as opposed to the other elections. Another difference is that the Democrats, the losers, favored their candidate, John Kerry, around 4 points more after the election, which again is not observed to this extent in the other elections. It should be noted that

the 2004 election is the only election that a Republican candidate got re-elected in our sample. Some Democrats might have thought that Kerry was successful in his campaign but Bush won with an incumbency advantage, thus favoring Kerry more after the election despite the defeat.

Table 2.8 Means of Feeling Scores for Both Winner and Loser Candidates Before and After the 2004 Election

Voters	$\Delta$ Pol	Pre-feel for	Post-feel for	Pre-feel for	Post-feel for
		Bush	Bush	Kerry	Kerry
Dem	1.74	22.96	↑ 25.36	74.81	↑ 78.94
Rep	-2.41	86.81	↑ 87.71	29.54	↑ 32.85
Total	-0.36	55.29	↑ 56.93	51.88	↑ 55.60

### 2.2.3 The 2016-2020 Time Series Study

We said that this was a short-term effect, happening in a few months. But what happens in the long term? Some respondents in the ANES sample participated in both the 2016 and 2020 studies, completing four different waves with pre- and after-election surveys. The following tables show those respondents' polarization levels before and after both elections, for those people who voted for only Democratic or Republican candidates in both elections, and who are included in our main regression sample. In 2016, the Democrats lost the election, and these respondents' polarization level decreased by around 2.2 points. However, their polarization surges by 8.6 points in just 4 years towards the other election. This means that our main finding, the decrease in polarization after the elections, withers away in 4 years with more recent developments. 2016 winners, the Republicans, also became more polarized in 4 years. The presidential honeymoon effect stays only as a honeymoon and is not carried to the term of Donald Trump.

Table 2.9 Democrats' Polarization

	2016		2020	
	Pre-election	After election	Pre-election	After election
Mean	70.80	↓68.58	77.21	↑83.33
N	634	634	634	634

Table 2.10 Republicans' Polarization

	2016		2020	
	Pre-election	After election	Pre-election	After election
Mean	65.52	↑68.31	74.31	↓72.58
N	442	442	442	442

The difference between the Democrats and Republicans after the 2020 election is also staggering. Some Republicans attacked the Capitol building, but here, the Democrats are 10 points more polarized than the Republicans. Perhaps the joy of getting rid of Donald Trump played an important role in these people's emotions.

The situation is not different when we look at the feeling ratings of the 2020 respondents in our sample (4472) in Table 2.11. The Democrats cannot hate Donald Trump more, meanwhile, Biden is less hated by the Republicans. Both leaders are rated at similar levels by their party bases. This suggests that despite high levels of polarization and partisanship, individual differences still make a big difference in the eyes of people. Before the election, Trump's rating by all people in the sample (39.18) is much less than Biden's (51.29). This can be attributed to Trump's unorthodox, more polarizing style of politics and scoring higher on the Dark Triad characteristics (narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism) than most of the world leaders (Nai and Toros 2020). Perhaps being exposed to Trump's unusual presidential term for 4 years, and then beating him in the 2020 election made the Democrats much more polarized than the Republicans. Therefore, we should question more how winning and losing an election impact feelings and emotions.

Table 2.11 Means of Feeling Scores for Both Winner and Loser Candidates Before and After the 2020 Election

Voters	$\Delta$ Pol	Pre-feel for	Post-feel for	Pre-feel for	Post-feel for
		Biden	Biden	Trump	Trump
Rep	-3.53	14.76	↑16.51	86.13	↓84.36
Dem	6.14	77.84	↑82.91	5.05	↓ 3.98
Total	2.07	51.29	↑54.97	39.18	↓37.81

## 2.3 Conclusion

This chapter presents an investigation of whether the winner (loser) status influences affective polarization change before and after elections. I employ individual-level data on 6 elections, which are panel data for each election, in the United States to assess the effects of the winner (loser) status and partisanship strength on affective polarization change during the election period. The empirical findings suggest that winners become more affectively polarized after elections than losers. This effect is robust in Republican or Democratic candidate wins, and non-incumbent or incumbent candidate wins. However, I also show that the context of the elections, the campaign style, and individualistic differences are highly important and lead to different outcomes.

Further research should focus on whether this effect exists for ideological and citizen polarization. This research only considers the affective polarization of individuals between presidential candidates. Some studies suggest that this increasing distance in affection is connected to ideological polarization as the latter influences the former (Rogowski and Sutherland 2016; Webster and Abramowitz 2017). However, is ideology something that can change at the level of emotions in the short-term? Moreover, Reiljan et al. (2024) argue that affective polarization between leaders is exceptionally and significantly higher than affective polarization between parties in the United States. The respondents' ratings towards one specific leader, e.g. Democrat Party leader, might differ from the ratings towards a group of people, e.g. Democrat Party citizens. Republican partisans might not be hated as much as Donald Trump by the Democrats. In fact, the same model with the dependent variable being the change in affective polarization towards the vice-presidential candidates in Appendix A.8 shows that the winning status has less explanatory power for the outcome for vice-presidential candidates.

Moreover, our research is limited to the United States case, where there is a majoritarian system with two significant political parties. Elections held under consensual democracies or authoritarian regimes might provide a different effect and explanation for our dependent variable.

This chapter also indicates that affective polarization is not constantly increasing, despite its steady rise over time, at least for some citizens. Table B.2 in Appendix shows an increase in the percentage of strong partisans across years, in line with the previous studies suggesting that polarization has been increasing. Despite high levels of polarization over time, we observe the same effect in our model even in 2020.

Further investigation into different mechanisms of affective polarization decrease might allow us to reduce the impact of the increase in it.

Perhaps we should question more how winning and losing an election impact the feelings and emotions of partisans. Accordingly, winning is fueling affective polarization, whereas election losers become slightly less polarized. Thus, “loss aversion” does not explain the relationship between affective polarization change and the elections in most of our cases.

Possible mechanisms behind this gap between winners and losers are investigated in the following chapter.

### 3. PARTISANSHIP, SURVEY TIMING, AND MEDIA CONSUMPTION

The previous chapter shows that the elections influence winners and losers differently in terms of their affective polarization change. As both groups' feelings toward the (new) President increase, this results in an increase in affective polarization of winners and a decrease of losers. In this chapter, I will try to find a possible mechanism to explain the difference between winners and losers. Is there a political characteristic that results in this difference, or is there another driving force? I will mainly focus on three variables: Partisanship, survey timing, and media consumption.

I expect that strong partisans should be much more affected by the election result than others as their loyalty and commitment to their party is higher than the moderates. A leaning partisan is closer and more tolerable toward the opposing partisans than a strong partisan. A strong partisan should hold both a) strong positive feelings towards their own party, and b) strong negative feelings towards the opposite party. Therefore, I expect that strong partisanship moderates the effect of winning status on the affective polarization change.

Another factor could be not a characteristic, but a matter of timing. As election campaigns intensify towards the election date, the voters are expected to hold stronger feelings towards that date. As one can expect, the election race is not as exciting one year before the election date as it is on the election day. Therefore, I check whether the timing of the survey moderates this relationship between the winning status and affective polarization change.

Lastly, I argue that high levels of political content consumption in media can be another driving force for this difference. As Cakmak (2023) argues, election losers opt out of following politics via media, and they choose to follow non-political content. This could lower their polarization as they are not exposed to polarizing content in addition to not being in an election campaign. Therefore, I expect media consumption to moderate the relationship between the winning status and affective

polarization change.

I continue to use the same ANES studies for the following explorations. The winner status variable is again the match of the pre-election intentions and post-election reports.

### **3.1 Partisanship Strength**

Partisanship, or at least choosing a side, is at the core of polarization which requires an understanding of “us” versus “them”. Partisanship is meaningful with the interactions one has with their co-partisans and also with the other party members (Greene 2004). Partisans find themselves in a meaningful environment while interacting with their co-partisans. With increased attachment and interaction, partisans perceive themselves as aligned with their co-partisans, thus partisanship becomes more significant. These partisan ties are stable and do not alter frequently (Richardson 1991). Therefore, partisanship creates a sense of belonging to one particular group.

Moreover, the echo chambers created by partisans increase polarization (Hobolt, Lawall, and Tilley N.d.). According to Diermeier and Li (2023), salient group identity can lead to high polarization levels. This type of belonging (partisanship) is not like membership to a club, but rather the partisans are emotionally connected to their parties. For example, DuBosar, Shaughnessy, and Hutchens (N.d., 19) argue that “electoral threats were associated with greater anger and electoral reassurance (operationalized as electoral threat to the opposing party) led to enthusiasm.” Even the partisans’ expectations create intense feelings. Moreover, Connors (2023) find that partisans expect other partisans to be polarized as well, making affective polarization socially desirable. More importantly, the partisan belongings do not change dramatically over time. These consequences are not confined to political life. Individuals tend to look for romantic partners who have similar political beliefs (Huber and Malhotra 2017). Negative partisans are less likely to favor someone from the disliked party even in daily life (Iyengar and Westwood 2015).

Therefore, strong partisans are not the same as moderate or non-partisans. The political outcomes will have a different impact on their feelings. Similar to pre-election polarization level findings, if the losers are less polarized after the election, this should be especially true for strong partisans, assuming that strong partisans are more polarized than others. They have more room to be less polarized after the intense election campaign period is over. They might feel not as strong and loyal

as they feel towards their candidate like before the election when they probably expected to win the race. Therefore, we expect this effect we find in the previous chapter to be moderated by partisanship strength. The influence of elections should not be the same for all partisans even though they are in the same political group. Similar to prior polarization level findings, I expect strong partisan winners (losers) to have an affective polarization change less than others.

**H2a:** *Strong partisans become less affectively polarized after elections.*

**H2b:** *As partisanship strength increases, the winner/loser status' effect on affective polarization change increases.*

### 3.1.1 Research Design for Partisanship

For the partisanship variable, there are three categories in the ANES studies: strong partisan, weak partisan and leaning partisan. The leaning partisans are the ones who have no partisan identity but feel closer to one party in comparison to the other. Therefore, those who do not feel closer to any particular party are excluded from our main sample. Control variables, namely age, gender, ideological extremity, household income, and having a college degree, are the same as the previous chapter.

The empirical specification of the model conditional on partisanship is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \text{Affective Polarization}_{it} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Winner Status}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{Partisanship Strength}_{it} \\ & + \beta_3 \text{Partisanship Strength}_{it} \times \text{Winner Status}_{it} + \beta_4 \text{Age}_{it} + \beta_5 \text{Gender}_{it} \\ & + \beta_6 \text{Ideological Extremity}_{it} + \beta_7 \text{Family Income}_{it} + \beta_8 \text{Interview Mode}_{it} + \\ & + \beta_9 \text{Election Closeness}_{it} + \beta_{10} \text{College Degree}_{it} + \alpha_i + \epsilon_{it} \end{aligned}$$

### 3.1.2 Findings for Partisanship

The OLS regression estimates on the full sample on the change in affective polarization between before and after elections conditional on partisanship are reported in Table 3.1. Adding the partisanship variable does not change the substantive significance of the winner status variable on the affective polarization change as the sample is the same as in the previous chapter. However, partisanship does not moderate the relationship between election winning (losing) and the affective polarization change as none of the interactive partisanship variables are statistically significant from



each other.

The (un)conditional effect of partisanship on change in affective polarization is also plotted in Figure 3.1 with all other variables set to their respective means or medians. The difference between winners and losers in terms of affective polarization change is not substantively different from each other at all partisanship levels. However, when we consider only winners or only losers, there is a significant difference between strong partisans and others.<sup>8</sup>

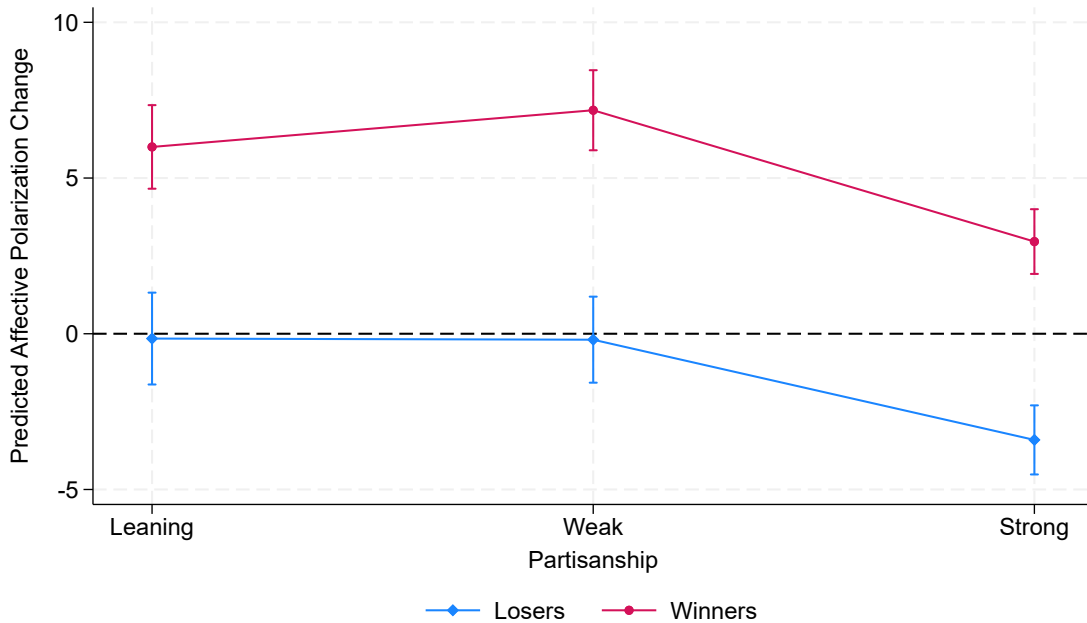
Table 3.1 OLS Regression on the Effect of Winning Status on Affective Polarization Change Conditional on Partisanship Strength

	Model 3
Winner Status	6.153*** (0.850)
Weak Partisanship	-0.036 (0.876)
Strong Partisanship	-3.254*** (0.780)
Winner Status × Weak Partisanship	1.214 (1.169)
Winner Status × Strong Partisanship	0.215 (1.019)
Constant	8.691*** (2.774)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.045
N	11673
Controls	✓
Year FE	✓

Robust standard errors in parentheses.  
The base category for partisanship is leaning partisans.  
Two-tailed tests. \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

<sup>8</sup>The result of the OLS regressions on the effect of partisanship on affective polarization change with election winner and loser samples is provided in Appendix B.3

Figure 3.1 The Effect of Winner Status on Affective Polarization Change Conditional on Partisanship



We cannot provide empirical evidence for H2b as the effect of winning status on affective polarization change is not conditional on the partisanship strength. As West and Iyengar (2022, 824) argue “Detaching partisans from their social identity does not consistently make them any less likely to elevate their in-group and to denigrate their opponents.” This suggests that affective polarization is not only driven by partisanship but is a richer concept. However, we find support for H2a, as strong partisan winners’ affective polarization change increases less than other winner groups, and strong partisan losers’ affective polarization change decreases more than loser groups. These findings once again suggest that strong partisans, like those who were already highly polarized, become more tolerable after the election intensity disappears. They might also suggest that partisanship strength also increases with the election campaigns, and when the voters are not exposed to such an intense propaganda period anymore, this increase might deflect.

### 3.2 Survey Timing

Another possible explanation for our main finding could be the timing of the survey. Some studies suggest that as elections lose their salience, polarization decreases (Hernández, Anduiza, and Rico 2021), meaning that the timing of the survey can

have an effect on the polarization level. According to this account, the closer the survey date to the election date, the more the respondent is likely to express a higher affective polarization level as the elections gain more salience and the campaigning period becomes more intensified. Therefore, the same respondent who is interviewed one week before the election is expected to report a higher polarization level than 10 weeks before the election.

Taking this theory into account, if the closeness to the election date is influential on affective polarization and on our emotional changes, we should see this effect only in the weeks that are close the election day. For example, the gap between winners and losers should be more differential right after the election, and it should be minimized as weeks go by. The first weeks after the election should be much more emotionally influential. After a few weeks and months, this influence should fade away.

Thus, I hypothesize the following:

**H3:** *As the survey date gets closer to the election date, the winner/loser status' effect on affective polarization change increases.*

### 3.2.1 Research Design for Survey Timing

To this end, I calculated the weekly distance from the survey interview date to the election date. I could not add the 2012 study to these models because they conducted online surveys in two different waves. All online users joined both of the waves, and I could not find in which wave they were asked for the feeling thermometer. The baseline category for the survey week in both the pre-election survey model and post-election survey is Week 1. The number of observations in each week for both pre and after-election surveys is reported in Table B.6 in Appendix.

The empirical specification of the model conditional on survey timing is as follows:

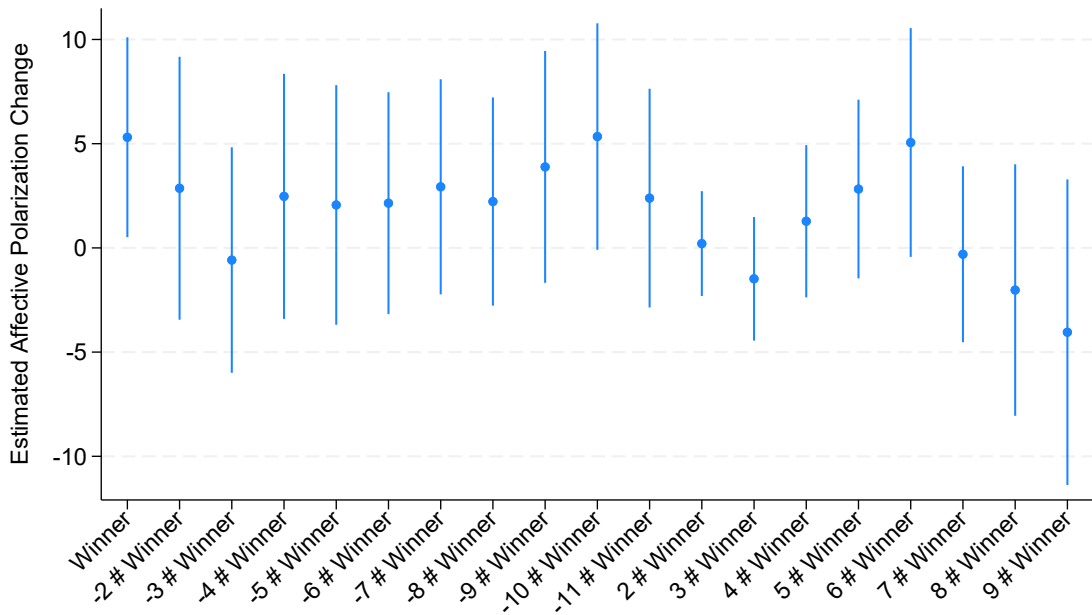
$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \text{Affective Polarization}_{it} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Winner Status}_{it} \\ & + \beta_2 \text{Pre-election Survey Dist.}_{it} + \beta_3 \text{Pre-election Survey Dist.} \times \text{Winner Status}_{it} \\ & + \beta_4 \text{Post-election Survey Dist.}_{it} + \beta_5 \text{Post-election Survey Dist.} \times \text{Winner Status}_{it} \\ & + \beta_6 \text{Age}_{it} + \beta_7 \text{Gender}_{it} + \beta_8 \text{Ideological Extremity}_{it} + \beta_9 \text{Family Income}_{it} \\ & + \beta_{10} \text{Interview Mode}_{it} + \beta_{11} \text{Election Closeness}_{it} + \beta_{12} \text{College Degree}_{it} + \alpha_i + \epsilon_{it} \end{aligned}$$

### 3.2.2 Findings for Survey Timing

The results of the regression model are presented in Appendix in Figure B.4 because of its length. The coefficient plots presented in Figure 3.2 show that the survey timing does not moderate our main finding. This either suggests that the election campaign periods become already quite intense in the last three months in the United States, or this mechanism does not explain the winner-loser gap for the affective polarization change.

Another possibility might be the following. The most distant date a survey is conducted after the election is after 9 weeks. At this time, the newly or re-elected president would not officially start their new term as the inauguration usually takes place on January 20. Therefore, we might see a conditional effect on the surveys conducted after the inauguration as the president's new term officially starts after this date.

Figure 3.2 The Effect of Winner Status on Affective Polarization Change conditional on the Survey Timing



Note: The numbers indicate the weekly distance to the election date, with (-) indicating the pre-election period. The baseline for the weeks is -1 and 1.

### 3.3 Media Consumption

Lastly, I explore whether media consumption conditions the relationship between the winning status and affective polarization change. The increase in polarization coincides with increased internet consumption and the emergence of social media (Lelkes, Sood, and Iyengar 2017). Törnberg (2022) argues that digital media fuels affective polarization through partisan sorting especially when individuals interact outside of their partisan bubbles. This finding might suggest that the polarization level of individuals is so high that they use out-group cues to strengthen their views and partisanship levels through motivated reasoning when they are outside of their echo chambers. Abramowitz and Webster (2018) also argue that pro-partisan media outlets fuel negative partisanship. Similar to party propaganda, those who only consume one-sided political information from the same media outlets, especially if those outlets are highly partisan, will only strengthen their partisanship views without hearing from the other camp. Moreover, the media outlets' stereotypical framing style also further polarizes the consumers (Han and Federico 2018).

Media outlets are quite influential in influencing people's opinions. Gerber, Karlan, and Bergan (2009) say media can increase political support for specific candidates. Lupia (1994, 63) argues that "access to... widely available information shortcuts allow(s) badly informed voters to emulate the behavior of relatively well-informed voters." Nevertheless, opinion dynamics can change at the same direction for all groups regardless of their political sophistication level (Enns and Kellstedt 2008). Moreover, the media's influence does not remain at the opinion level, as DellaVigna and Kaplan (2007) find that the introduction of Fox News in some towns increased the Republican vote share.

The election result is not the only outcome that can affect the citizens' polarization after the elections. In fact, Cakmak (2023) argues that election losers prefer to stay away from political content as the election result is disappointing for them, and follow more non-political content, which might be the reason for the losers' decrease in affective polarization in our finding. If that is true, the losers are less exposed to political content and, therefore, one-sided information. There is no reason for winners to stay away from watching politics, on the contrary, they would be more delighted to see their victory. Moreover, they might be excited to see what the President and the Party are planning to do during their term, which might even increase their media consumption.

Thus, I hypothesize the following:

**H4:** *As media consumption increases, the winner/loser status' effect on affective polarization change increases.*

### 3.3.1 Research Design for Media Consumption

For the following model, I added a media consumption variable. The 2020 study is missing in this model because there is no equivalent question. In other surveys, including 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016, the respondents are asked how many days in a typical or the last week they watched the national news in the pre-election survey. Before 2016, this question only includes the TV as the medium to watch the news. However, in 2016, the respondents are asked “During a typical week, how many days do you watch, read, or listen to news on TV, radio, printed newspapers, or the Internet, not including sports?” I grouped the respondents into 3 categories for media consumption to have more observations in each group: 0 for those who said they did not watch national news on any day in a week, low level of consumption means they watched 1-3 days, high level means they watched 4-7 days in a week.

Different from previous surveys, in 2020, the respondents were asked “how closely do you follow politics on TV, radio, newspapers, or the Internet?” Instead of giving a day number, they choose between: “Very closely, Fairly closely, Not very closely, Not at all.” Another difference from the previous studies is this question is asked after the election in the 2020 study. The finding for the 2020 study is presented in a different model. We can see a different influence in the 2020 study because of the addition of different mediums, because the answer set is different, and because the question is asked after the election.

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \text{Affective Polarization}_{it} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Winner Status}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{Media Consumption}_{it} \\ & + \beta_3 \text{Media Consumption}_{it} \times \text{Winner Status}_{it} + \beta_4 \text{Age}_{it} + \beta_5 \text{Gender}_{it} \\ & + \beta_6 \text{Ideological Extremity}_{it} + \beta_7 \text{Family Income}_{it} + \beta_8 \text{Interview Mode}_{it} \\ & + \beta_9 \text{Election Closeness}_{it} + \beta_{10} \text{College Degree}_{it} + \alpha_i + \epsilon_{it} \end{aligned}$$

### 3.3.2 Media Outlets

To show that the respondents feed themselves from pro-partisan outlets, I grouped the media outlets that the respondents were listening to, watching, or reading for only 2012, 2016, and 2020 because of available media classification studies. For

the 2012 and 2016 studies, I used the Pew Research Center’s American Trends Panel (Wave 1) survey from 2014 to classify media outlets.<sup>9</sup> In the study, the ideological standpoint of the average consumers of the media outlets is listed. The average points include 3 categories: Mostly liberal, Mixed, and Mostly conservative. For 2020, I used AllSides Media Bias Chart: Version 3 to code conservative and liberal media outlets.<sup>10</sup> I grouped people who consume only conservative, or liberal outlets/programs under these categories.<sup>11</sup> The rest, i.e. those who did not report following only one ideological type of outlet, is under the mixed category.

In the 2012 ANES study, the respondents were asked “which TV programs/radio programs/websites/papers R visits/watches/reads regularly.” In 2016, they were asked “From which of the following sources have you heard anything about the presidential campaign?”

Why is this important? Because partisan media outlets favor their party and disfavor the opposite party. They prepare their broadcast based on this feature. The pro-partisan outlets give more coverage to a) the problems in the country when the incumbent president is from the opposite party (Larcinese, Puglisi, and Snyder 2011), b) the issues the party they support is more proficient at (Puglisi 2011), and c) the scandals that the opposite party is involved (Puglisi and Snyder 2011).

Therefore, following only pro-partisan outlets would feed the voters’ support to their party, while continuing to present the other group as unfavorable. Through motivated reasoning, the partisans increase their commitment to their ideas and political support by not hearing the alternative (Boyer 2023; Nir 2011; Vegetti and Mancosu 2020).

The following tables show the distribution of Republicans and Democrats based on the outlet/program they follow for the news in the regression samples. They show that partisans excessively follow co-partisan outlets than opposite-partisan outlets. This is in line with Iyengar and Hahn (2009), who argue that partisans select pro-partisan outlets and avoid out-partisan outlets even for non-partisan subjects such as crime.

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<sup>9</sup><https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/feature/media-polarization/>

<sup>10</sup><https://www.allsides.com/blog/new-allsides-media-bias-chart-version-3>

<sup>11</sup>The outlets/programs used in the classification are provided in Appendix.

Table 3.2 2012 Media Outlets

	Media type			Total
	Mixed	Liberal	Conservative	
Losers (Rep)	632	83	506	1,221
Winners (Dem)	1,060	592	155	1,807
Total	1,692	675	661	3,028

Table 3.3 2016 Media Outlets

	Media type			Total
	Mixed	Liberal	Conservative	
Losers (Dem)	423	543	20	986
Winners (Rep)	545	82	205	832
Total	968	625	225	1,818

Table 3.4 2020 Media Outlets

	Media type			Total
	Mixed	Liberal	Conservative	
Losers (Rep)	1,083	355	444	1,882
Winners (Dem)	879	1,705	6	2,590
Total	1,962	2,060	450	4,472

### 3.3.3 Findings for Media Consumption

Table 3.5 shows the OLS regression on the effect of winner status interacting with media consumption on the affective polarization change for the election years of 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016. The interaction term becomes significant when media consumption is high with a coefficient of 4.4 and a standard error of 1.8. This indicates that the winning status influences the affective polarization change only when the voters frequently follow politics on media. The marginal plot of the same model in Figure 3.4 shows that, for the losers of high-media consumers, the affective polarization decreased by about 4 points on average, whereas for the winners of high-media consumers, it increased by about 1.9. There is no statistically significant difference between low and no consumers for the effect of winning (losing).



Therefore, we can conclude that media consumption moderates the relationship between the winning status and affective polarization change for frequent watchers.

However, the model based on the 2020 study shows us a different picture. Table 3.6 shows the results of the same model with the 2020 study. The media consumption still moderates the relationship between the winning and polarization change, but this time the other way around. Figure 3.5 shows that the difference between the winners and losers appears the most for those who reported not closely following politics at all, and the least for those who reported that they are very closely following.

This difference between the previous studies and the 2020 study might be due to the difference in the wording and the question type. In 2020, the respondents themselves indicated how closely they follow politics via media, in which they can lie more easily, may want to present themselves as politically active or think that they really follow politics closely. In the previous studies, there was a better indicator as the respondents had to report a day number in which they watched national news, from which we can understand how much they are really exposed to political content.

Moreover, social media and internet usage is much more prevalent in 2020, capturing more mediums than television. In fact, the new generations spend much less time watching television or reading printed media (Twenge, Martin, and Spitzberg 2019). Instead of a scheduled time for the evening news on television, social media exposes us to all sorts of content constantly, which perhaps makes it difficult to measure its effect.

Additionally, this question was asked after the election in 2020. If loser partisans avoid following political content on media, there would be less strong partisan losers for very close followers than strong partisan winners. For strong partisan losers in our sample in 2020, 50 and 22 percent of them state that they follow politics on media “fairly closely” and “very closely” respectively. For strong partisan winners, this is respectively 48 and 36 percent.<sup>12</sup> This is in line with our theory as strong partisan winners follow more political content on media than strong partisan losers after the election.

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<sup>12</sup>Author’s calculation not presented here.

Table 3.5 The Effect of Winner Status on Affective Polarization Change Conditional on Media Consumption

	Model 4
Winner Status	1.535 (1.638)
Media Consumption=Low	-1.578 (1.501)
Media Consumption=High	-4.174*** (1.345)
Media Consumption=Low × Winner Status	1.763 (2.004)
Media Consumption=High × Winner Status	4.359** (1.758)
Age	-0.060*** (0.017)
Gender (male)	-0.774 (0.534)
Ideological Extremity	1.660*** (0.447)
Family Income (logged)	-0.586** (0.298)
Interview Mode	1.598** (0.718)
Election Closeness	1.844*** (0.667)
College	-0.243 (0.577)
Constant	12.801*** (3.701)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.031
N	7197
Year FE	✓

Robust standard errors in parentheses.  
The base category for media consumption is None.  
Elections included: 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016.  
Two-tailed tests. \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

Table 3.6 The Effect of Winner Status on Affective Polarization Change Conditional on Media Consumption

	Model 5: 2020 Election
Winner Status	16.333*** (3.376)
Media Consumption=Not very closely	3.835* (2.327)
Media Consumption=Fairly closely	2.797 (2.244)
Media Consumption=Very closely	7.843*** (2.418)
Media=Not very closely × Winner Status	-4.753 (3.622)
Media=Fairly closely × Winner Status	-6.601* (3.494)
Media=Very closely × Winner Status	-11.794*** (3.630)
Age	-0.030 (0.019)
Gender (male)	-1.470** (0.641)
Ideological Extremity	1.468** (0.580)
Family Income (logged)	-0.331 (0.331)
Interview Mode	0.367 (1.444)
Election Closeness	1.485** (0.690)
College	-0.242 (0.670)
Constant	-3.781 (4.572)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.059
N	4472

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

The base category for media consumption is Not at all.

Two-tailed tests. \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

Figure 3.3 The Effect of Winning Status on Affective Polarization Change Conditional on Media Consumption (the Model in Table 3.5)

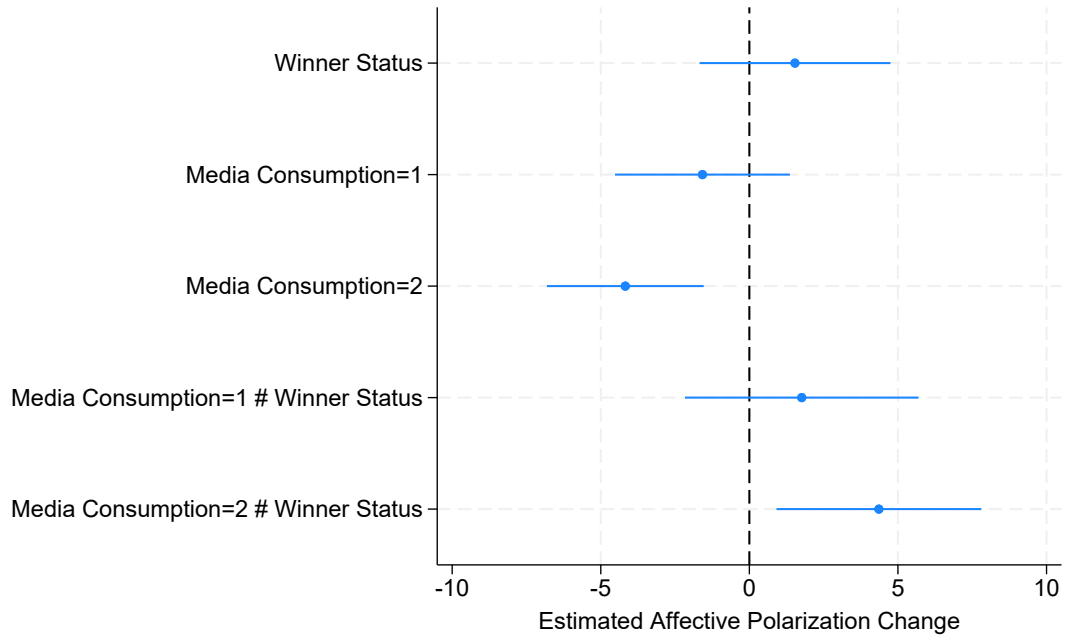


Figure 3.4 The Marginal Effect of Winning Status on Affective Polarization Change Conditional on Media Consumption (the Model in Table 3.5)

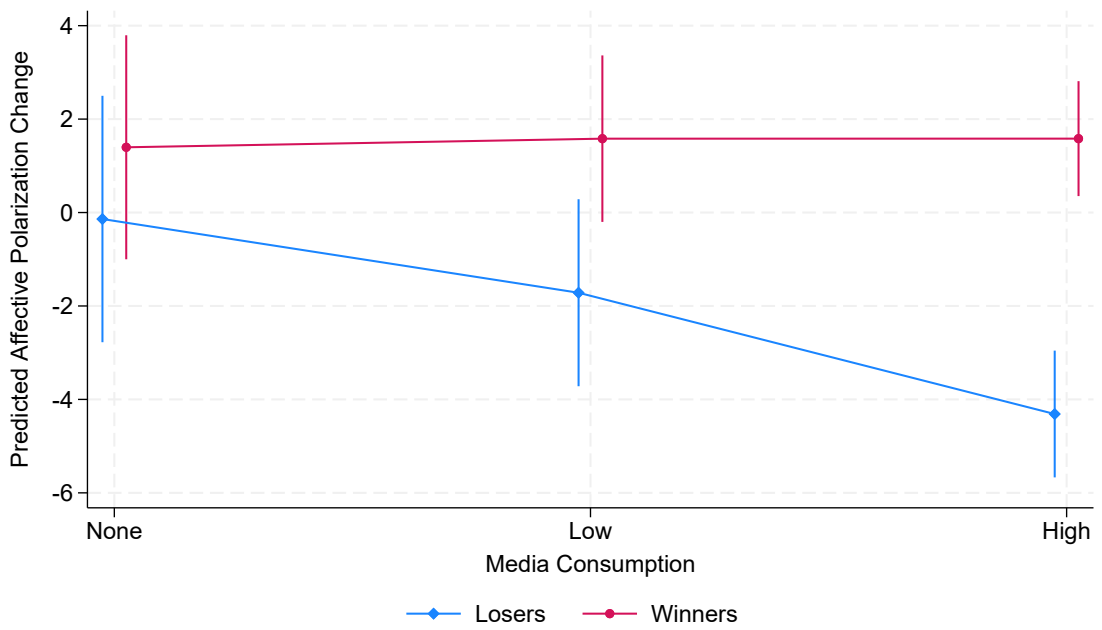
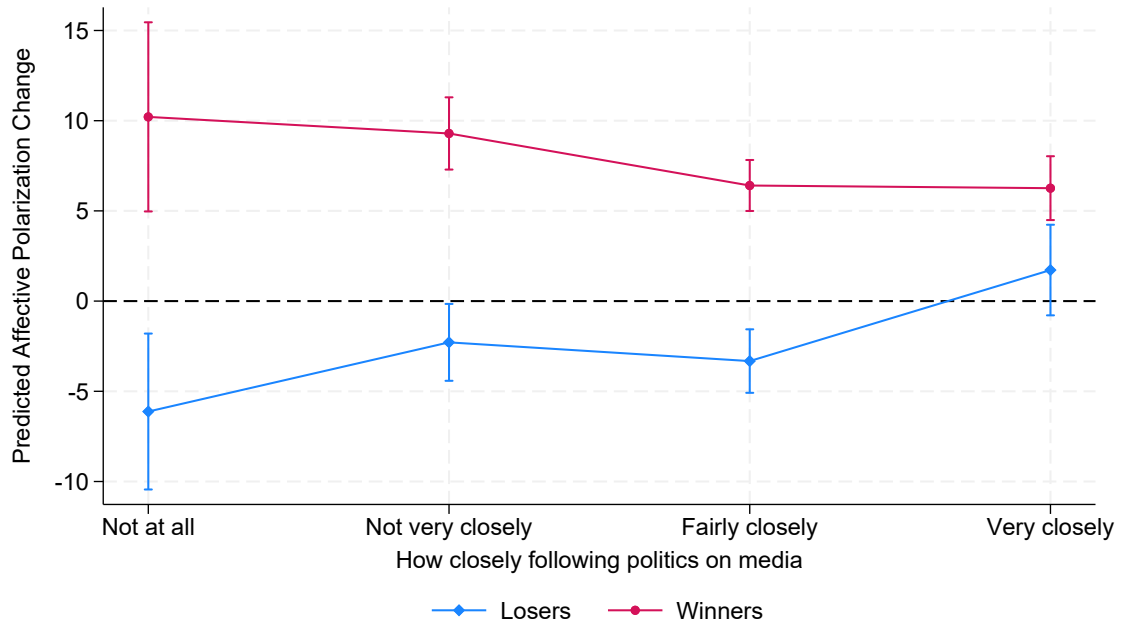


Figure 3.5 The Marginal Effect of Winning Status on Affective Polarization Change Conditional on Media Consumption in 2020



### 3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I analyze the effect of winning status on affective polarization change conditional on a) partisanship strength, b) survey timing, and c) media consumption. I find that partisanship strength and survey timing do not moderate this relationship, but the strong partisans are significantly different than others when we consider either only the winners or losers.

Except for 2020, I find that this gap between winners and losers in terms of affective polarization change does significantly exist only for those who follow politics on media at high levels. This shows the further polarizing effect of the media outlets, especially during the election campaign periods. As voters feed themselves from only co-partisan, and possibly biased, sources, they are further polarized with one-sided information in addition to being exposed to party propaganda. This polarizing effect of media consumption disappears for election losers after the elections, as they possibly do not prefer to watch ‘disappointing’ political content. Whereas winners might be more eager to watch politics as they have expectations for the future of the term of the President they voted for, further fueling their polarization.

In this line, Kubin and von Sikorski (2024) suggests putting a “polarizing con-

tent warning” which might indirectly reduce polarization by warning the readers/watchers about the content. What perhaps happens is that partisans increase the strength of their views and political support to their parties through motivated reasoning. As indicated above, pro-partisan outlets give more coverage to the issues the party they support is more competent, and to the problems of the opposite party. This broadcasting style does not allow those partisans to hear an alternative but rather makes them continue to commit to their political support. As more pro-party favorable and opposite party disfavorable content they are exposed to, the more they are likely to be further polarized in these echo chambers.

## 4. CONCLUSION

This thesis explores the relationship between elections and affective polarization by separating election winners and losers. There are few studies investigating how election winning (losing) influences affective polarization. The effect of election-winning (losing) on emotions should not be the same for these groups as both groups were expecting to win the race, especially in the United States case. This should be especially true for the voters' emotions towards the presidential candidates with the formers waiting for months, years if they are not in power, to be (re-)declared as the winners.

To this end, I employ non-interactive and interactive OLS regressions on the American National Election Study (ANES) time series surveys for the elections since 2000. In the second chapter, I find that the election outcome, in fact, influences the winners and losers differently in terms of their affective polarization change towards the presidential candidates. Counterintuitively, the results suggest that the election winners, on average, become more polarized with the election result, whereas the losers become less polarized. This change is statistically significantly different with a coefficient of 6.5. A one-unit change in the winning status, simply moving from the losers to winners, results in a change in the affective polarization change that is about 29% of the standard deviation, suggesting that our main independent variable has a relatively strong influence on the outcome. This change after the election comes from the increased ratings towards (re-)elected president for both losers and winners. This suggests that presidents enjoy a political honeymoon period in the first months of their terms, influencing the title of this thesis. This effect is robust in Republican or Democratic candidate wins, non-incumbent and incumbent candidate wins, and for the affective polarization towards vice-presidential candidates as well.

Moreover, I find that losers become more polarized after the election only in 2000 and 2004 in our sample with 2004 being the only anomaly that shows no significant difference between winners and losers. This suggests that the different election contexts and individual differences have a distinct influence on our outcome. Out

of these 6 elections, the distance between the winners and losers in terms of their affective polarization change is realized the most in the 2008 election in which the first black president of the United States, Obama, was elected. Obama mainly built his campaign around emotions, such as hope and change. Strikingly and unusually, the Republicans' feeling rating toward Obama increased more than the Democrats' feeling rating toward him after the election.

The empirical findings also suggest that there is a period in which the partisans feel more tolerant towards the opposite (winning) candidate. So far, there is no indication that this honeymoon period could become permanent as polarization has been increasing over decades (Abramowitz and Webster 2016; Phillips 2022). In fact, Markowitz (2021) argues that the scale of the honeymoon effect has been getting smaller over the years due to increasing polarization. Making this period permanent is the responsibility of the presidents.

In fact, I find that the partisans became much more polarized at the end of Donald Trump's presidential term in 2020 than in the aftermath of the 2016 election. So, we do not observe the continuation of the honeymoon effect in the long run. Moreover, being exposed to a very unusual period under Donald Trump in 4 years and then getting rid of him made the Democrats much more polarized than the Republicans. While both groups favored their candidates, Biden and Trump, at a similar level, the Democrats hate Trump more than the Republicans hate Biden. We should wait for a few months to see how the Republicans feel toward Biden after his first term and whether we will have a similar picture.

This suggests that political science scholars should question more how winning or losing an election impacts our feelings. "Loss aversion" might not be applicable to the relationship between the elections and affective polarization as I show that winning an election fuels emotions in a polarizing manner whereas this is not the case for losing in most of the elections in our sample.

Meanwhile, those who become less polarized after the elections for both losers and winners are mainly the ones who were already highly polarized before the election. This suggests that as the intense election campaign periods end, the voters feel less polarized as they are not highly exposed to party propaganda anymore. This might also suggest that the Republicans, who raided the Capitol Building by arguing the 2020 elections were rigged, might not constitute a majority even within highly polarized partisans. This is perhaps worrisome as well, in the sense that polarization is becoming normal for ordinary citizens.

In the third chapter, I explore possible mechanisms to explain the winner-loser gap



in affective polarization change after the elections. First, I explore if this effect is conditional on partisanship strength. Using the partisanship variable the ANES provided -which includes strong, weak, and leaning partisans- I employ an interactive OLS regression. In fact, the partisanship strength does not moderate the effect of election-winning (losing) on affective polarization change. However, I find that strong partisan winners' affective polarization increases significantly less than weak and leaning winner partisans, whereas strong partisan losers' affective polarization decreases more than weak and leaning loser partisans. As elections are over, the strong partisans have more room to be less polarized as they perhaps felt very intense emotions during the campaign period.

As a different mechanism, I explore whether the survey timing is effective in explaining the main finding. The theory behind this is as the election date approaches, voters can feel more polarized. A respondent who is surveyed one day before the election might rate the presidential candidates differently than when she is surveyed three months before the election. Due to the survey structure, I could not add the 2012 study to this model. I calculated the weekly distance of the survey to the election date. In short, the survey timing also does not moderate the relationship between election winning and affective polarization change.

As the last explanation, I argue that this effect can be conditional on high levels of media consumption. Media outlets can be a polarizing source (Abramowitz and Webster 2018; Törnberg 2022), especially if they are pro-partisan. Those who only consume one-sided political information from the same media outlets, especially if those outlets are highly partisan, will only strengthen their views without hearing from the other political group. To this end, I employ an OLS regression, interacting media consumption and election-winning. Media consumption variable accounts for how frequently the respondents watch national news or politics in a week. For the model combining 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016 studies, I find that frequently watching national news on media explains the difference between winners and losers in terms of affective polarization change. While there is no statistically significant difference between winners and losers when they are exposed to media either when a) not at all, or b) at low levels, there is a difference for high-level consumers.

This finding is in line with Cakmak (2023), who argues that election losers prefer to stay away from political content as the election result is disappointing for them. Thus, the losers are not exposed to political media content after the election, cutting away one source of polarization, even if temporarily. There is no reason for winners not to follow politics, as they are perhaps more eager to follow the developments and what their President is going to do in their term, or even to follow the disappointment

of the other groups.

Even though Janssen (2024) also separates winners and losers in their design, they investigate how election-winning (losing) impacts political support conditional on polarization levels. However, affective polarization itself is impacted by the election results as I show that affective polarization does not change in the same direction for the election winners and losers. Therefore, we should take into account that the relationship between elections and affective polarization itself is important and needs to be taken into consideration.

Further research should focus on whether the winner-loser gap for affective polarization change exists for ideological and citizen polarization. The affective polarization at the leader level is exceptionally higher than at the party level in the United States (Reiljan et al. 2024). Considering that ideological polarization influences affective polarization (Rogowski and Sutherland 2016; Webster and Abramowitz 2017), it is a question whether the results would hold for ideological polarization as well. One might expect that citizens' ideological stances might not change as much as emotions in the short run. Moreover, polarization at the leader level considers only two persons, the presidential candidates. If they are polarizing figures, such as Trump, the opposite groups' ratings towards them will not be favorable. However, the same partisans might not feel the same resentment towards the opposite partisans, as the latter consists of millions of different people. Another investigation should focus on whether election losers associate less with their (loser) parties and candidates.

Moreover, this research is limited to the United States, where there is a majoritarian system with two significant political parties. Elections held under consensual democracies or authoritarian regimes might provide a different effect and explanation for our outcome. For example, coalition opportunities in multiparty systems might reduce the effect of election-winning (losing) as non-winners can still be a part of the governing body, or have an influence on the policies (Adams, Gidron, and Horne 2023; Wagner and Praprotnik 2024).

Beyond all these points, there is always a measurement problem for affective polarization. The questions of how to precisely measure affect and emotions and whether they can be understood with only one survey question are waiting to be answered. The ANES studies ask respondents to rate their feelings towards the candidates on a 0-100 thermometer. Is this enough to measure affection? According to Bakker and Lelkes (2024, 431), "We do not clearly understand the affective component of polarisation. Hence, the concept remains conceptually muddled and poorly measured." Therefore, it should be checked in future research if the results of this thesis hold with different affective polarization measurements.

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## APPENDIX A

### Appendix for Second Chapter

#### A.1 Affective Polarization and Elections

##### A.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table A.1 Descriptive Statistics of the Models

	<b>N</b>	<b>P50</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>SD</b>
Aff. Polarization Change (DV)	11673	0	.37	-160	154	22.2
Winner Status	11673	1	.56	0	1	.5
Partisanship	11673	2	1.29	0	2	.82
Age	11673	53	51.64	17	93	16.55
Gender (male)	11673	0	.45	0	1	.5
Ideological Extremity	11673	.86	.91	.04	2.57	.58
Family Income (logged)	11673	11.12	10.97	8.19	12.61	.97
College	11673	0	.44	0	1	.5
Interview Mode (Internet=1)	11673	1	.66	0	1	.47
Election Closeness (Close=1)	11673	1	.75	0	1	.43
Election Year	11673	2016	2014.21	2000	2020	5.95

Table A.2 The Distribution of Sample across Election Years

<b>Year</b>	<b>N</b>
2000	712
2004	551
2008	1090
2012	3029
2016	1819
2020	4472
Total	11673

### A.1.2 Robustness and Sensitivity Checks for the Main Model

There are several different robustness and sensitivity checks of our main model provided here. In the first model in Table A.3, the model of the effect of election-winning on affective polarization change is provided by not excluding both voting misreports and non-partisan voters. For the winner status variable, only the respondents' post-election reporting on whom they voted is taken into consideration without matching it with their pre-election intentions. There is no huge difference in the substantive effect of election-winning on our outcome. In the second model, the only difference from our main model is that non-partisans are included. So, those who did not report their voting intentions before the election or those whose intentions do not match with their post-election reporting on whom they voted are dropped.

The sample weights provided by the ANES in each election study to make the survey sample representative of the country are added in the third model. The weighted model increases the explanatory power of election-winning on affective polarization change dramatically.

In the fourth model, the affective polarization change (DV) is calculated with the following absolute formula.

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \text{ Affective Polarization} = & | \text{Post-election feeling score for voted candidate} \\ & - \text{Post-election feeling score for opposite candidate} | \\ & - | \text{Pre-election feeling score for voted candidate} \\ & - \text{Pre-election feeling score for opposite candidate} |. \end{aligned}$$

This formula suggests that if a voter was polarized 20 points in favor of the Democratic candidate before the election and became polarized 20 points in favor of the Republican candidate after the election, the affective polarization change of them is simply 0. Since I assumed this direction change was valuable to keep, the dependent variable in the main model is calculated with the normal formula.

In the fifth model, ideological extremity, which can be a bad control, is dropped. The last model in Table A.3 is calculated by dropping some possible misreportings. 650 respondents are dropped in this model, who reported to be the partisan of the Democratic Party but voted for the Republican candidate, or vice versa. The coefficient of election-winning changes very slightly again.

Table A.3 OLS Regressions on Affective Polarization Change

	With Voting Misreports & Non-partisans		With Non-partisans		Absolute Formula		Without Ideology		Partisan Misreports	
	With & Non-partisans	Non-partisans	Non-partisans	Weighted	Formula	Ideology	Ideology	Misreports	Misreports	
Winner Status	7.000*** (0.420)	6.699*** (0.405)	11.534*** (2.092)	5.819*** (0.399)	6.439*** (0.420)	6.316*** (0.420)				
Age	-0.087*** (0.013)	-0.061*** (0.012)	-0.066 (0.054)	-0.052*** (0.012)	-0.059*** (0.012)	-0.054*** (0.012)				
Gender (male)	-0.922** (0.417)	-1.073*** (0.401)	2.190 (1.858)	-1.190*** (0.395)	-1.171*** (0.410)	-1.213*** (0.415)				
Family Income (logged)	-0.941*** (0.224)	-0.601*** (0.217)	-2.165* (1.235)	-0.389* (0.215)	-0.522** (0.223)	-0.499** (0.226)				
College	-0.688 (0.444)	-0.036 (0.427)	-0.371 (2.100)	0.029 (0.420)	0.076 (0.435)	0.093 (0.440)				
Interview Mode	1.558** (0.642)	1.713*** (0.627)	0.605 (0.878)	1.282** (0.612)	1.432** (0.635)	1.547** (0.640)				
Election Closeness	1.484*** (0.493)	1.801*** (0.471)	0.443 (2.518)	2.007*** (0.463)	1.627*** (0.478)	1.959*** (0.485)				
Ideological Extremity	0.593* (0.359)	1.346*** (0.344)	-1.884 (1.701)	1.245*** (0.339)		1.895*** (0.356)				
Constant	17.550*** (2.735)	9.548*** (2.662)	28.866** (14.311)	6.672** (2.625)	10.127*** (2.678)	7.138*** (2.766)				
R <sup>2</sup>	0.037	0.040	0.066	0.036	0.038	0.040				
N	13583	12380	11673	11673	11673	11023				
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Two-tailed tests. \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

### A.1.3 Alternative Design

An alternative research design can be constructed for this study. Instead of subtracting the pre-election polarization scores from the post-election polarization scores in the dependent variable, we can simply leave the post-election polarization scores as the outcome, while making the pre-election scores an independent variable. Most of the information on our equation is gathered before the election, except ideological extremity, or they do not usually change in a short period, like sex, income, and education. Therefore, we can leave the post-polarization level as the only variable that could change with the election result, except for ideological extremity, in our design.

The empirical specification of this alternative model would be the following:

$$\begin{aligned}\Delta\text{Post-Polarization Level}_{it} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1\text{Winner Status}_{it} + \beta_2\text{Pre-Polarization Level}_{it} \\ & + \beta_3\text{Age}_{it} + \beta_4\text{Gender}_{it} + \beta_5\text{Ideological Extremity}_{it} \\ & + \beta_6\text{Family Income}_{it} + \beta_7\text{College Degree}_{it} \\ & + \beta_8\text{Interview Mode}_{it} + \beta_9\text{Election Closeness}_{it} + \alpha_i + \epsilon_{it}\end{aligned}$$

Both post- and pre-polarization measures are continuous again, and range between -100 and 100. The negative score can be obtained if a respondent reported to be voting for a Democrat candidate but favored the Republican candidate more than the Democrat candidate, or vice versa. In our sample with 11,673 people, the observations in negative scores consist of only 0.77% for the pre-election polarization level and 1.11% for the post-election polarization level.

In the following table, both models including and not including ideological extremity are provided. This new design immensely increases  $R^2$  as pre-election polarization highly explains the post-election polarization level as well. Out of 11,673 people, 3,006 of their polarization levels do not change after the elections.

Table A.4 OLS Regressions on Affective Polarization Change

	DV: Post-Election Polarization	
Winner Status	7.393*** (0.377)	7.598*** (0.382)
Pre-Election Polarization	0.631*** (0.007)	0.667*** (0.007)
Age	-0.003 (0.011)	-0.009 (0.011)
Gender (male)	-1.708*** (0.373)	-1.943*** (0.378)
Family Income (logged)	-0.393* (0.202)	-0.588*** (0.205)
Interview Mode	2.337*** (0.577)	2.236*** (0.585)
Election Closeness	-1.754*** (0.442)	-2.131*** (0.448)
College	-0.550 (0.396)	-0.176 (0.400)
Ideological Extremity	5.931*** (0.332)	
Constant	18.168*** (2.483)	24.956*** (2.487)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.538	0.526
N	11673	11673
Year FE	✓	✓

Robust standard errors in parentheses.  
Two-tailed tests. \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

Table A.5 Descriptive Statistics for the Alternative Design

	<b>N</b>	<b>P50</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>SD</b>
Post-Election Polarization	11673	70	63.73	-100	100	29.12
Pre-Election Polarization	11673	70	63.36	-100	100	27.96

### A.1.4 Incumbent vs. Non-Incumbent & Republican vs. Democrat Wins

Table A.6 OLS Regressions on Affective Polarization Change with Split-Sample Design of Incumbent and Non-Incumbent Wins

	Incumbent Win	Non-Incumbent Win
Winner Status	2.015*** (0.749)	8.653*** (0.500)
Age	-0.075*** (0.023)	-0.056*** (0.015)
Gender (male)	-1.200* (0.723)	-0.947* (0.496)
Ideological Extremity	1.735*** (0.605)	1.630*** (0.432)
Family Income (logged)	-0.206 (0.391)	-0.689** (0.271)
Interview Mode	1.681* (0.885)	0.634 (0.914)
Election Closeness	2.916*** (0.947)	1.069* (0.558)
College	-0.351 (0.791)	0.013 (0.520)
2008		-10.613*** (1.066)
2012	-2.346** (1.190)	
2016		-5.958*** (1.181)
2020		-4.548*** (1.255)
Constant	1.313 (4.597)	9.845*** (3.268)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.012	0.054
N	3580	8093

Robust standard errors in parentheses. The base category is 2004 for the election year in incumbent win, and 2000 in non-incumbent win. Two-tailed tests. \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

In Table A.6, I separated the election years based on whether the incumbent president's party continues to hold the office. If it is a non-incumbent win, the winners had to wait for at least one term to assume office. Not surprisingly, the results suggest that election-winning is more powerful on emotions when the voters did not win an election for at least one term. If they re-win the election, there is still a substantial effect, but the explanatory power of it decreases a lot. Re-winning the office is influencing the emotions much more than continuing to hold it.

Similarly, the significant and substantive effect of election-winning (losing) on the outcome does not change with Republican vs. Democratic parties' wins in Table A.7, but it has more explanatory power when a Democrat candidate wins the election.



Table A.7 OLS Regressions on Affective Polarization Change with Split-Sample Design of Republican and Democratic Wins

	Republican Win	Democrat Win
Winner Status	5.296*** (0.827)	7.285*** (0.490)
Age	-0.078*** (0.024)	-0.048*** (0.014)
Gender (male)	-1.677** (0.835)	-0.819* (0.472)
Ideological Extremity	3.077*** (0.695)	0.783* (0.410)
Family Income (logged)	-0.275 (0.491)	-0.496** (0.251)
Interview Mode	0.922 (1.182)	1.706** (0.756)
Election Closeness	1.701* (1.007)	1.851*** (0.546)
College	-0.427 (0.862)	-0.019 (0.508)
2004	-5.778*** (1.265)	
2012		1.185 (0.934)
2016	-6.007*** (1.338)	
2020		4.937*** (1.028)
Constant	6.445 (5.693)	-2.254 (2.943)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.034	0.042
N	3082	8591

Robust standard errors in parentheses. The base category is 2000 for the election year in Republican win and 2008 in Democrat win.  
Two-tailed tests. \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

### A.1.5 Vice-presidential Candidate Polarization

The following model provides a comparison between feelings towards the presidential and vice-presidential candidates. Since our main model only captures the polarization at the leader level, it is important to check if the findings are robust at other levels. Unfortunately, the ANES studies only enable us to do this for presidential and vice-presidential candidates in 2012, 2016, and 2020, as other feeling thermometer questions (such as towards the parties or partisans) are not asked both before and after the elections.

The results suggest that election-winning also explains the affective polarization change towards the vice-presidential candidates, though with a smaller effect. However, Figure A.1 shows that polarization at the vice-presidential level increases for both winners and losers, but with different levels.

Figure A.1 The Effect of Winning Status on Affective Polarization Change towards Vice-presidential Candidates

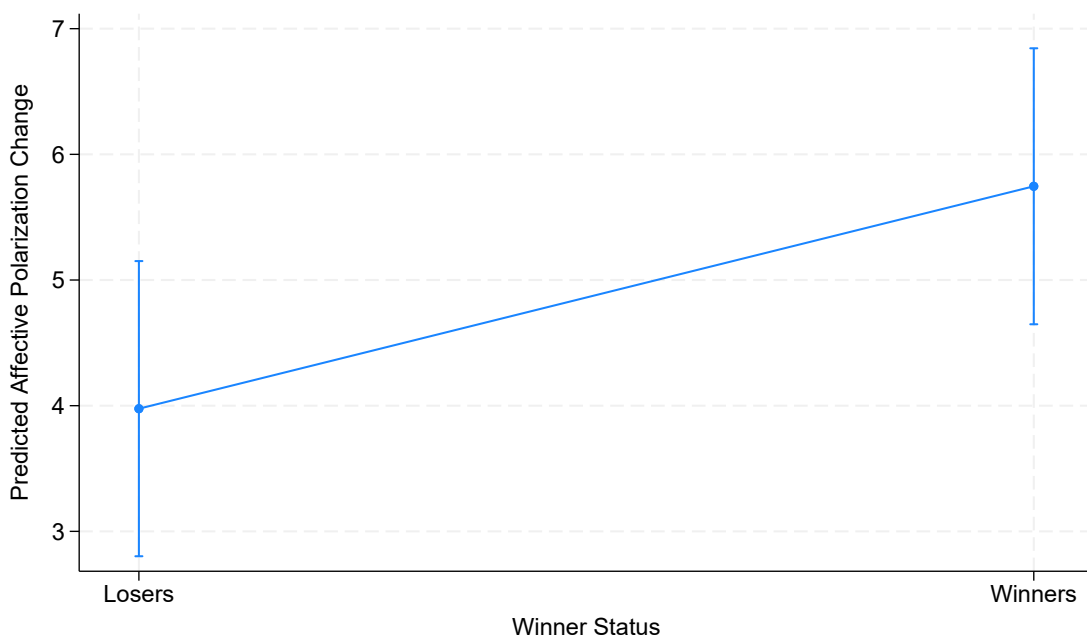


Table A.8 OLS Regressions on Affective Polarization Change towards (Vice-)presidential Candidates

	DV: Vice-pres. candidates	DV: Pres. candidates
Winner Status	1.770*** (0.554)	6.726*** (0.461)
Age	-0.118*** (0.016)	-0.045*** (0.014)
Gender (male)	-1.090** (0.544)	-1.082** (0.453)
Ideological Extremity	1.513*** (0.469)	1.744*** (0.390)
Family Income (logged)	-0.246 (0.288)	-0.210 (0.239)
Interview Mode	-0.282 (0.801)	1.766*** (0.667)
Election Closeness	2.461*** (0.625)	2.108*** (0.520)
College	-0.531 (0.572)	0.631 (0.476)
2016	9.250*** (0.828)	2.125*** (0.689)
2020	9.302*** (0.638)	3.629*** (0.530)
Constant	3.112 (3.376)	-5.268* (2.808)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.038	0.042
N	8555	8555

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Election years include 2012, 2016, and 2020.

Two-tailed tests. \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

## APPENDIX B

### Appendix for Third Chapter

#### B.1 Partisanship

The descriptive statistics for the partisanship model is provided in Table A.1.

Table B.1 The Distribution of Partisans

<b>Partisanship</b>	<b>N</b>
Leaning	2692
Weak	2927
Strong	6054
Total	11673

Table B.2 The Percentages of Partisans across Election Years in the Full Sample with 11,673 Observations

<b>Partisanship</b>	<b>Election Year</b>						<b>Total</b>
	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016	2020	
Strong	43.82	45.01	48.90	50.48	53.27	55.08	51.86
Weak	30.20	29.95	28.07	26.94	25.01	21.69	25.07
Leaning	25.98	25.05	23.03	22.58	21.72	23.23	23.06
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table B.3 OLS Regressions on the Effect of Partisanship Strength on Affective Polarization

	Winners	Losers
Weak Partisanship	1.412* (0.734)	0.063 (0.932)
Strong Partisanship	-2.349*** (0.655)	-3.611*** (0.846)
Age	-0.026* (0.016)	-0.068*** (0.020)
Gender (male)	-0.585 (0.516)	-1.804*** (0.657)
Ideological Extremity	0.815* (0.453)	4.563*** (0.623)
Family Income (logged)	-0.415 (0.277)	-0.568 (0.366)
Interview Mode	0.790 (0.773)	1.478 (1.068)
Election Closeness	2.083*** (0.622)	0.691 (0.758)
College	-0.513 (0.559)	0.029 (0.688)
Constant	14.160*** (3.447)	8.872** (4.431)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.034	0.031
N	6565	5108
Year FE	✓	✓

Robust standard errors in parentheses.  
The base category for partisanship is leaning partisans.  
Two-tailed tests. \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

## B.2 Survey Timing

Table B.4 OLS Regression on the Effect of Winning Status on Affective Polarization Change Conditional on Survey Timing

	Model for Survey Timing
Winner Status	5.309** (2.446)
Pre-election week = 2	-0.354 (2.356)
3	2.878 (2.059)
4	1.601 (2.247)
5	3.971* (2.205)
6	2.814 (2.024)
7	1.486 (1.964)
8	0.670 (1.912)
9	2.093 (2.117)
10	0.596 (2.152)
11	3.300 (2.077)
Pre-election week = 2 $\times$ Winner Status	2.861 (3.218)
3 $\times$ Winner Status	-0.583 (2.759)
4 $\times$ Winner Status	2.473 (3.000)
5 $\times$ Winner Status	2.060 (2.932)
6 $\times$ Winner Status	2.148 (2.716)
7 $\times$ Winner Status	2.931 (2.633)

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8 × Winner Status	2.224 (2.548)
9 × Winner Status	3.886 (2.838)
10 × Winner Status	5.342* (2.772)
11 × Winner Status	2.389 (2.677)
Post-election week = 2	-0.723 (0.971)
3	0.552 (1.123)
4	-1.116 (1.374)
5	-1.406 (1.609)
6	-3.451* (2.084)
7	-0.471 (1.588)
8	0.114 (2.284)
9	3.931 (2.746)
Post-election week = 2 × Winner Status	0.207 (1.283)
3 × Winner Status	-1.482 (1.512)
4 × Winner Status	1.279 (1.863)
5 × Winner Status	2.824 (2.188)
6 × Winner Status	5.057* (2.800)
7 × Winner Status	-0.305 (2.153)

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8 × Winner Status	-2.023 (3.078)
9 × Winner Status	-4.045 (3.740)
Constant	9.655*** (3.660)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.053
N	8641
Year FE	✓
Controls	✓

Robust standard errors in parentheses.  
The base category for election weeks is Week 1.  
Two-tailed tests. \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

Table B.5 Descriptive Statistics for the Model in Table B.4

	<b>N</b>	<b>P50</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>SD</b>
Aff. Polarization Change (DV)	8641	0.00	1.04	-160.00	154.00	22.53
Winner Status	8641	1.00	0.55	0.00	1.00	0.50
Pre-election Survey Week	8641	7.00	6.86	1.00	11.00	2.89
Post-election Survey Week	8641	2.00	2.94	1.00	9.00	2.06
Age	8641	52.00	51.61	17.00	93.00	16.79
Gender (male)	8641	0.00	0.44	0.00	1.00	0.50
Ideological Extremity	8641	0.86	0.91	0.07	2.57	0.57
Family Income (logged)	8641	11.19	11.03	8.19	12.61	0.94
Interview Mode	8641	1.00	0.64	0.00	1.00	0.48
Election Closeness	8641	1.00	0.73	0.00	1.00	0.45
College	8641	0.00	0.46	0.00	1.00	0.50
Election Year	8641	2020	2014.98	2000	2020	6.75



Table B.6 The Number of Observations within the Weeks Survey Conducted Before and After the Elections

<b>Week</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
-1	392	5
-2	368	4
-3	787	9
-4	506	6
-5	569	7
-6	868	10
-7	1,079	12
-8	1,499	17
-9	674	8
-10	828	10
-11	1,071	12
1	2,378	28
2	2,459	28
3	1,366	16
4	755	9
5	504	6
6	284	3
7	519	6
8	227	3
9	149	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,641</b>	<b>100</b>

### B.3 Media Consumption

Table B.7 The Descriptive Statistics of the Media Consumption Model in Table 3.5

	<b>N</b>	<b>P50</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>SD</b>
Aff. Polarization Change (DV)	7197	0	-.68	-150	135	22.53
Winner Status	7197	1	0.55	0	1	0.50
Media Consumption	7197	2	1.58	0	2	0.67
Age	7197	52	50.64	17	93	16.38
Gender (male)	7197	0	0.45	0	1	0.50
Ideological Extremity	7197	0.82	0.90	0.04	2.57	0.59
Family Income (logged)	7197	11.08	10.92	8.19	12.61	0.95
Interview Mode	7197	0	0.48	0	1	0.50
Election Closeness	7197	1	0.80	0	1	0.40
College	7197	0	0.39	0	1	0.49
Election Year	7197	2012	2010.61	2000	2016	4.86

Table B.8 The Descriptive Statistics of the Media Consumption Model for the 2020 study in Table 3.6

	<b>N</b>	<b>P50</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>SD</b>
Aff. Polarization Change (DV)	4472	0	2.07	-160	154	21.55
Winner Status	4472	1	0.58	0	1	0.49
Media Consumption	4472	2	1.95	0	3	0.79
Age	4472	55	53.23	18	80	16.69
Gender (male)	4472	0	.46	0	1	.50
Ideological Extremity	4472	.86	.91	.13	2.06	.55
Family Income (logged)	4472	11.26	11.07	8.52	12.43	.99
Interview Mode	4472	1	.95	0	1	.22
Election Closeness	4472	1	.67	0	1	.47
College	4472	1	.51	0	1	.50

#### The classification of media outlets/programs

##### **2012 Liberal**

Daily Show with Jon Stewart. Talk of the Nation (NPR). All Things Considered (NPR) (radio). Online paper New York Times. Print paper NYT. Website NYT. Colbert Report. Huffington Post. Online paper Washington Post. Print paper Washington Post. Website Washington Post

##### **2012 Conservative**

Glenn Beck program (radio). The Sean Hannity Show (radio). The Rush Limbaugh Show (radio). Drudge Report. Fox Report. Fox News website

## **2016 Liberal**

Website The Guardian. All Things Considered (NPR) (Radio). The Late Show with Stephen Colbert. Website NYT. BuzzFeed.com. PBS News Hour. BBC News (news.bbc.co.uk). Huffington Post website. Washington Post website. Printed Washington Post

## **2016 Conservative**

Rush Limbaugh (radio). The Sean Hannity Show (radio). The Glenn Beck program (radio). Fox News website.

## **2020 Liberal**

Website BuzzFeed. Website CNN. The lead with Jake Tapper (CNN) (TV Prog). Cuomo Prime Time (CNN) (TV Prog). Erin Burnett OutFront (CNN) (TV Prog). Website Huffington Post. The Rachel Maddow Show (MSNBC) (TV Prog). The Last Word with Lawrence O'Donnell (MSNBC) (TV Prog). Morning Joe (MSNBC) (TV Prog). All In with Chris Hayes (MSNBC) (TV Prog). The 11th Hour with Brian Williams (MSNBC) (TV Prog). Website NYT. Print NYT. Online newspaper NYT. ABC World News Tonight (TV Prog). Good Morning America (ABC) (TV Prog). Website Bloomberg. CBS Evening News with Norah O'Donnell (TV Prog). 60 Minutes (CBS) (TV Prog). Face the Nation (CBS) (TV Prog). CBS This Morning (TV Prog). Website the Guardian. Website Washington Post. Print Washington Post. Online newspaper Washington Post. Website Yahoo News. All Things Considered (NPR) (radio). Morning Edition (NPR) (radio). Website NPR News. NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt (TV Prog). Meet the Press (NBC) (TV Prog). Website NBC News

## **2020 Conservative**

Hannity (Fox) (TV Prog). Tucker Carlson Tonight (Fox) (TV Prog). The Five (Fox) (TV Prog). The Ingraham Angle (Fox) (TV Prog). The Story with Martha MacCallum (Fox) (TV Prog). Special Report with Bret Baier (Fox) (TV Prog). Website Fox News (www.foxnews.com). Website Daily Caller (dailycaller.com). Printed, The Wall Street Journal. Online paper, online.wsj.com.