

Models of Citizen Electoral Vote-Choice

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Teaching Agenda

- ① Revisiting the Simple Partisan Model of Vote-Choice
- ② Policy-Based Voting: The Spatial Model
- ③ Valence-Based Voting: The Case of Iraq
- ④ Valence-Based Voting: The Case of Candidate Valence

How do citizens hold elites electorally accountable?



Motivating Question

What are some of the factors that you think predicts how citizens translate their political preferences? Are there varying costs to using these models?

Models of *Electoral Control*

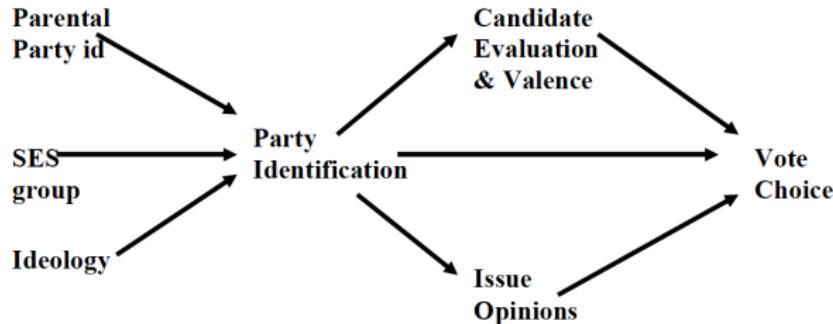
Models of Electoral Control

| Heuristic | Vote-Choice Model | Implications for Representatives | Analytical Purposes |
|------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Ideology | Spatial/Proximity Voting | Responsive to Median Voter | Representation & Candidate Positioning |
| Partisanship | Michigan Model | Responsive to Partisan Base | Explaining vote choice/partisan bias |
| Valence | Retrospective Model/Valence Rule | Develop reputation, (honesty/integrity), monitor economy | Explaining electoral outcomes, pres. forecasting |

Note: Partisanship & ideology are generally prospective models.

Revisiting the Michigan Model

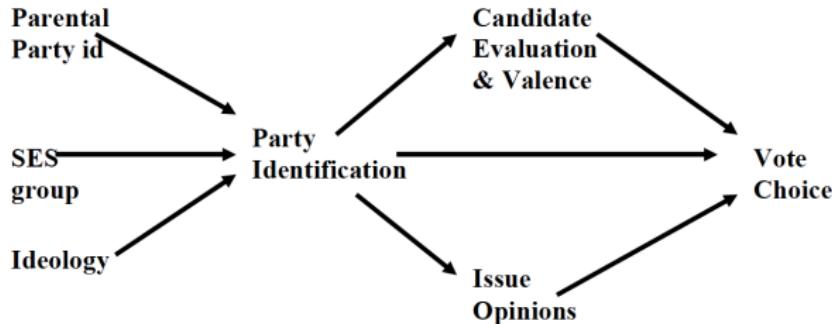
“MICHIGAN MODEL” OF VOTING CHOICE



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- ▶ Partisanship influenced by socialization, resources, & ideology
- ▶ Important heuristic for voting, valence evaluations (economy, candidates) & issue opinions
- ▶ *Simple Partisan Model:* Partisanship → Candidate Choice

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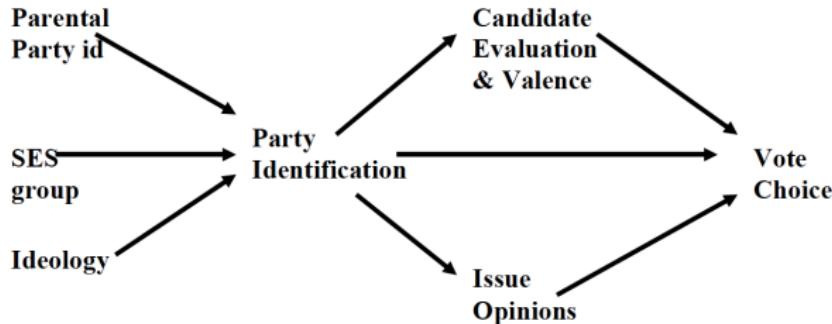
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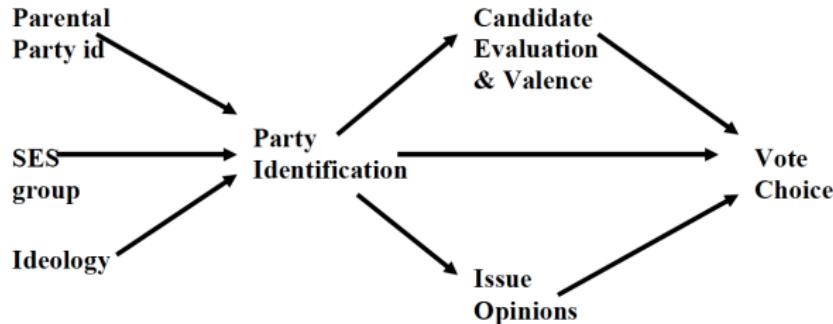
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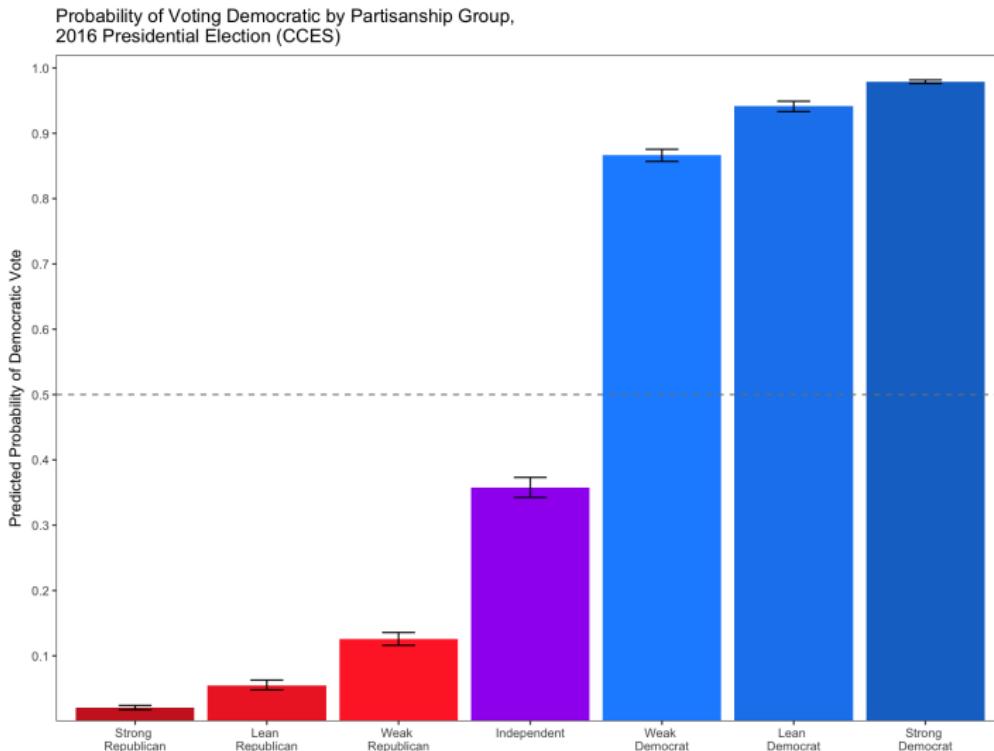
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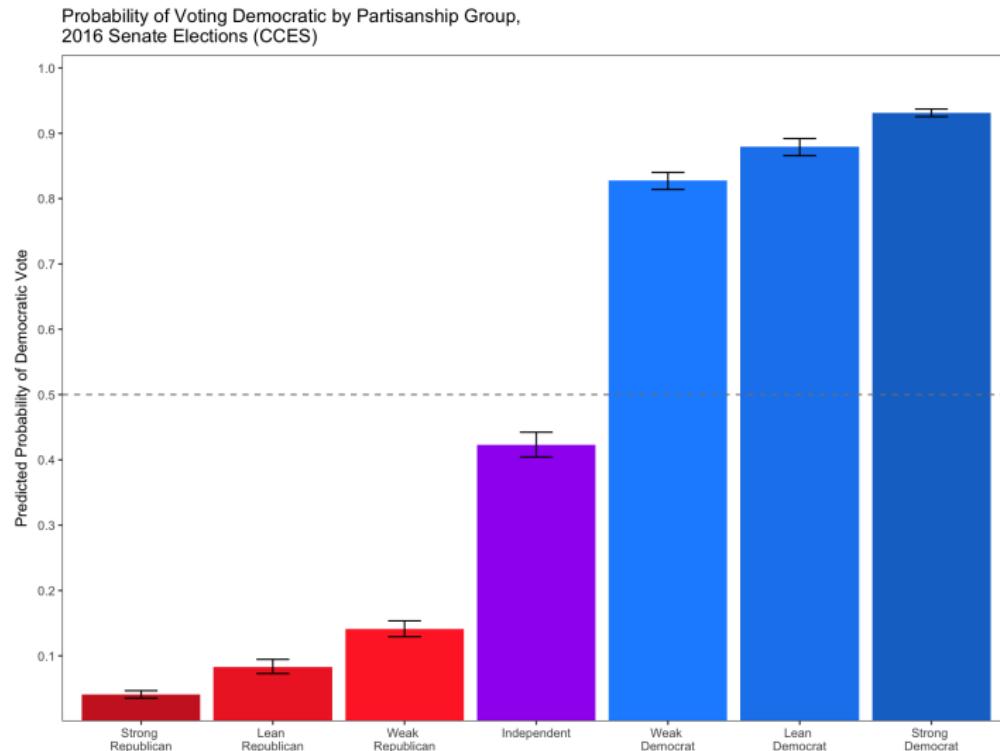


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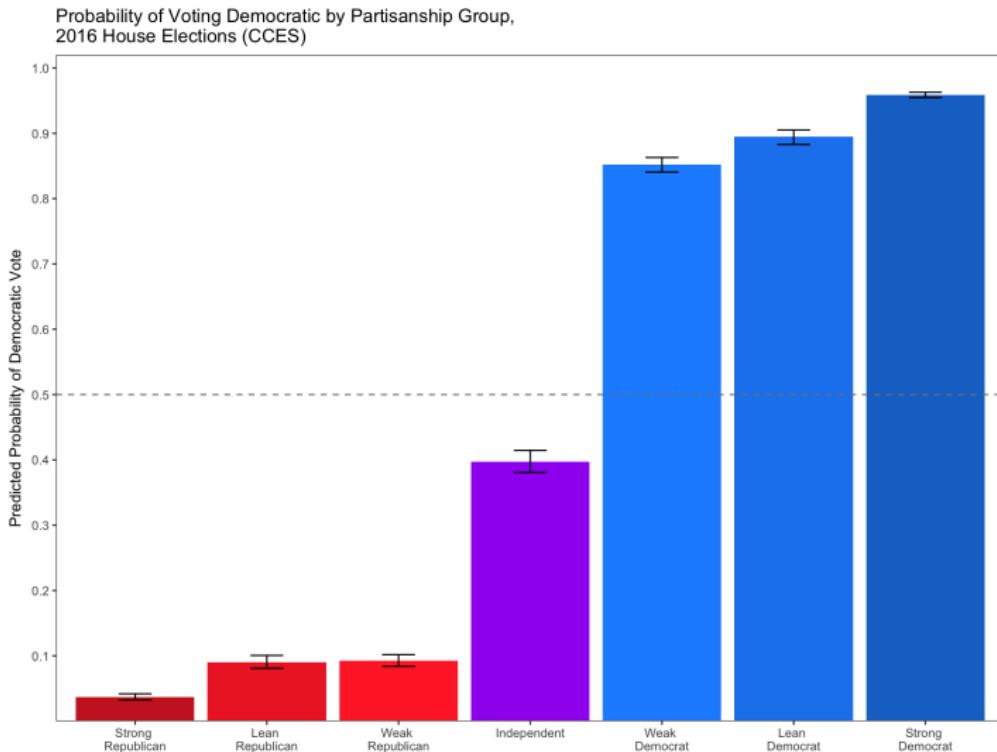
Partisan Voting in the 2016 Presidential Election



Partisan Voting in the 2016 Senate Elections



Partisan Voting in the 2016 House Elections



Assessing the *Partisan Model*

- ▶ Does this model help explain vote-choice in the 2016 presidential elections?
- ▶ Partisanship is a “sticky” form of identification, voters are “resistant” to changing their partisanship (Michigan Model)
- ▶ What are some of the potential pitfalls of the partisan model of voting?
- ▶ No mention of ideology on policy issues of candidates & parties
- ▶ Can distort spatial voting, especially in *depolarized* races and lead to incorrect inferences about candidate positions (conservative Democrats & Liberal Republicans)
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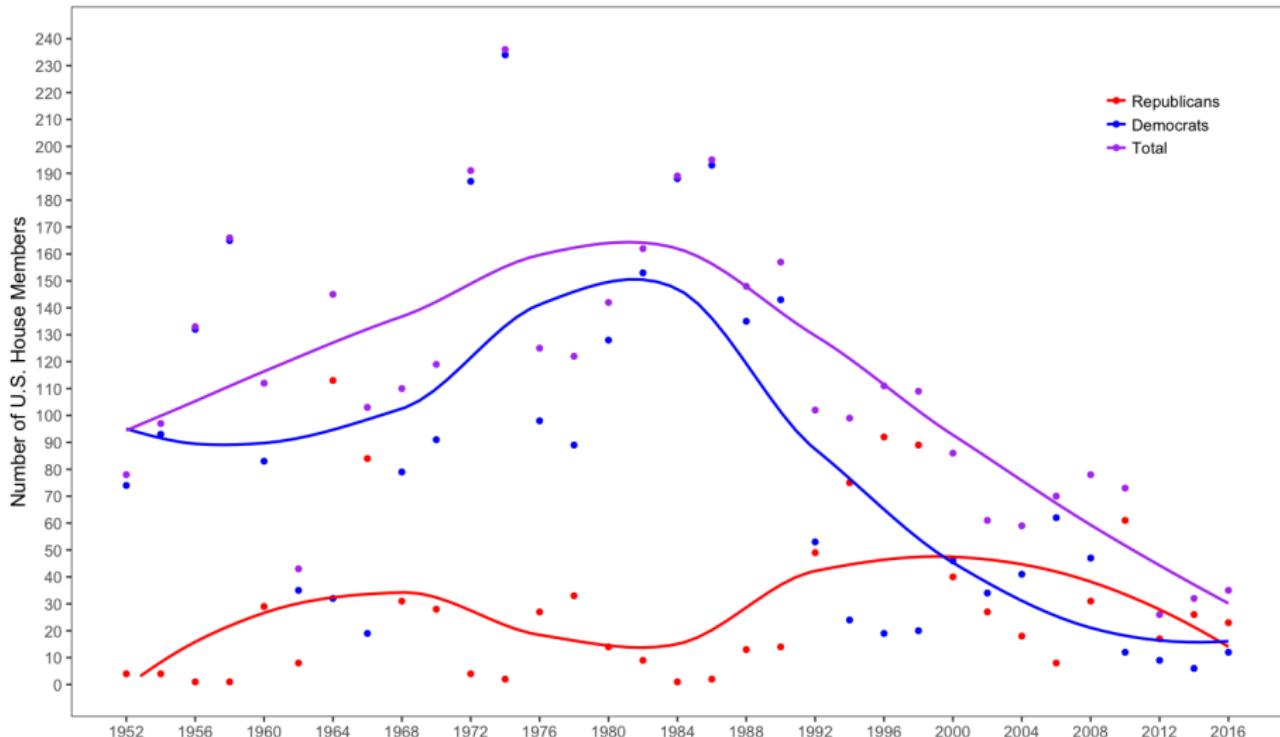
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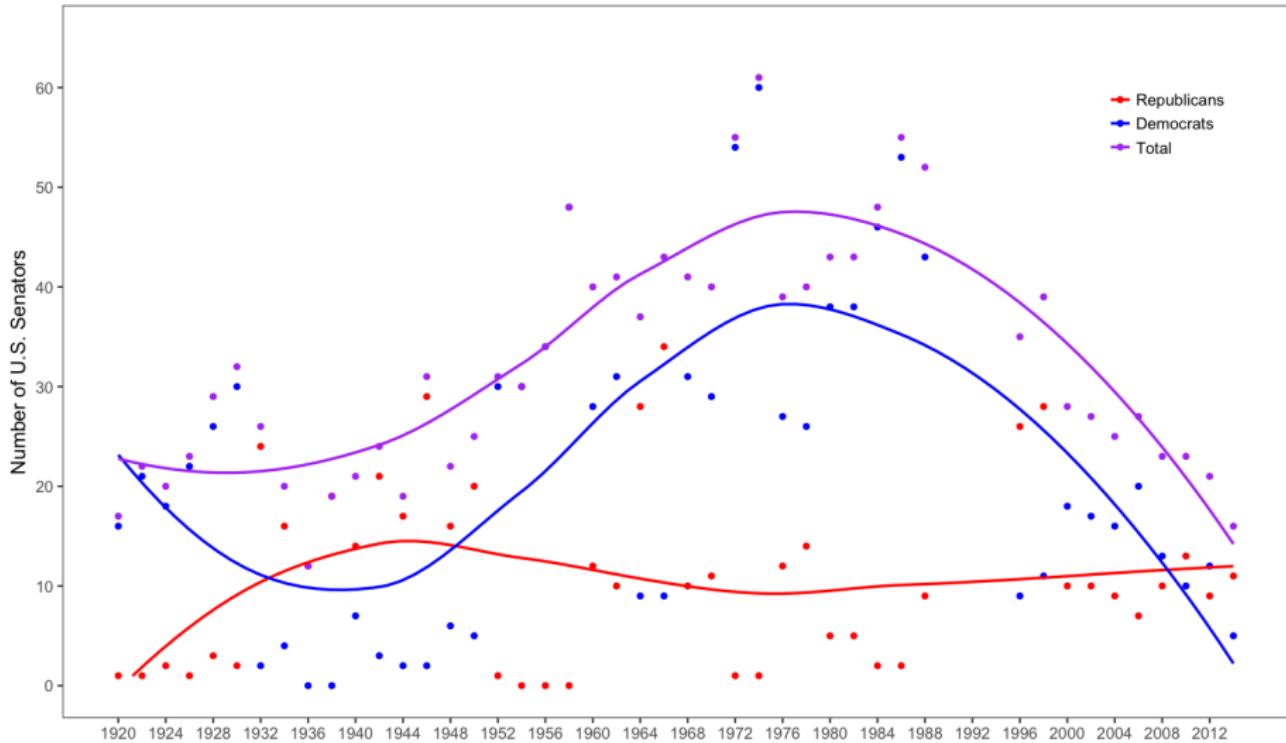
Implications? U.S. House

Number of House Members Representing Districts Won by Opposing Party's Presidential Nominee, 1952-2016



Implications? U.S. Senate

Number of Senators Representing States
Won by Opposing Party's Presidential Nominee, 1920-2014



Using Ideological Self-Interest (Preferences) as a Short-Cut

- ▶ Ideology = coherent & consistent *belief system* around a set of policy issues
- ▶ Traditional view is that ideology limited to elites rather than mass public, costly to develop *consistent* issue beliefs
- ▶ Heuristic where voters are able to place themselves & candidates on the same scale, with voters choosing candidates that are closer to them in ideological proximity
- ▶ Model assumes voter capacity to place *themselves & candidate*
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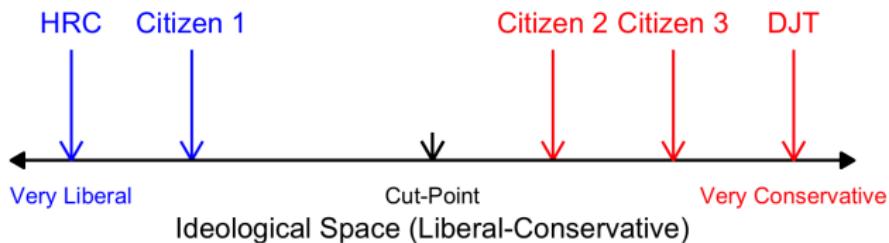
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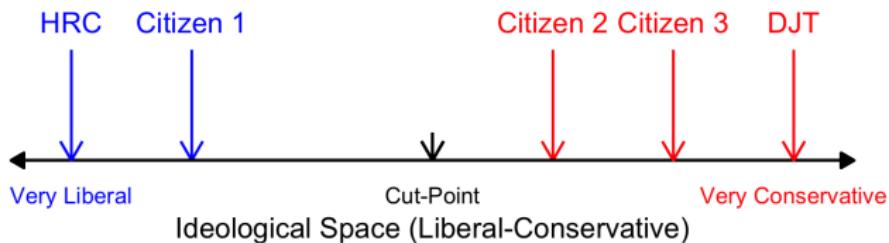
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Specifying The Spatial Model of Voters & Candidate



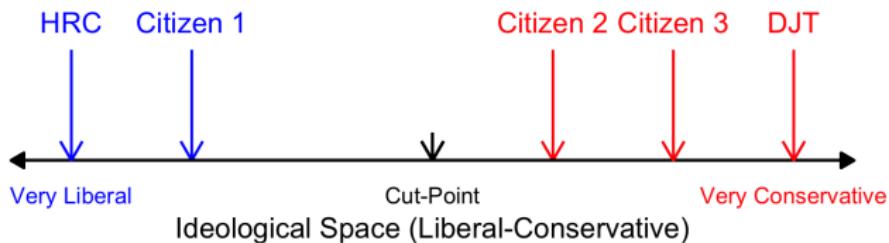
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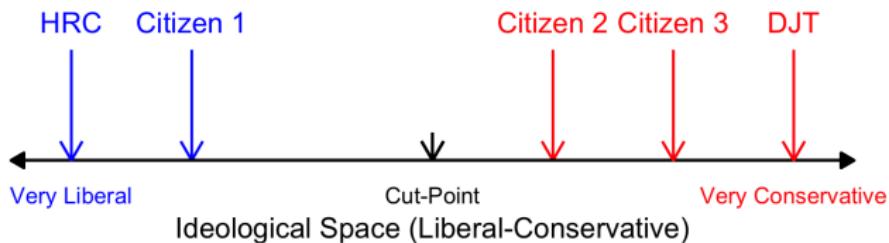
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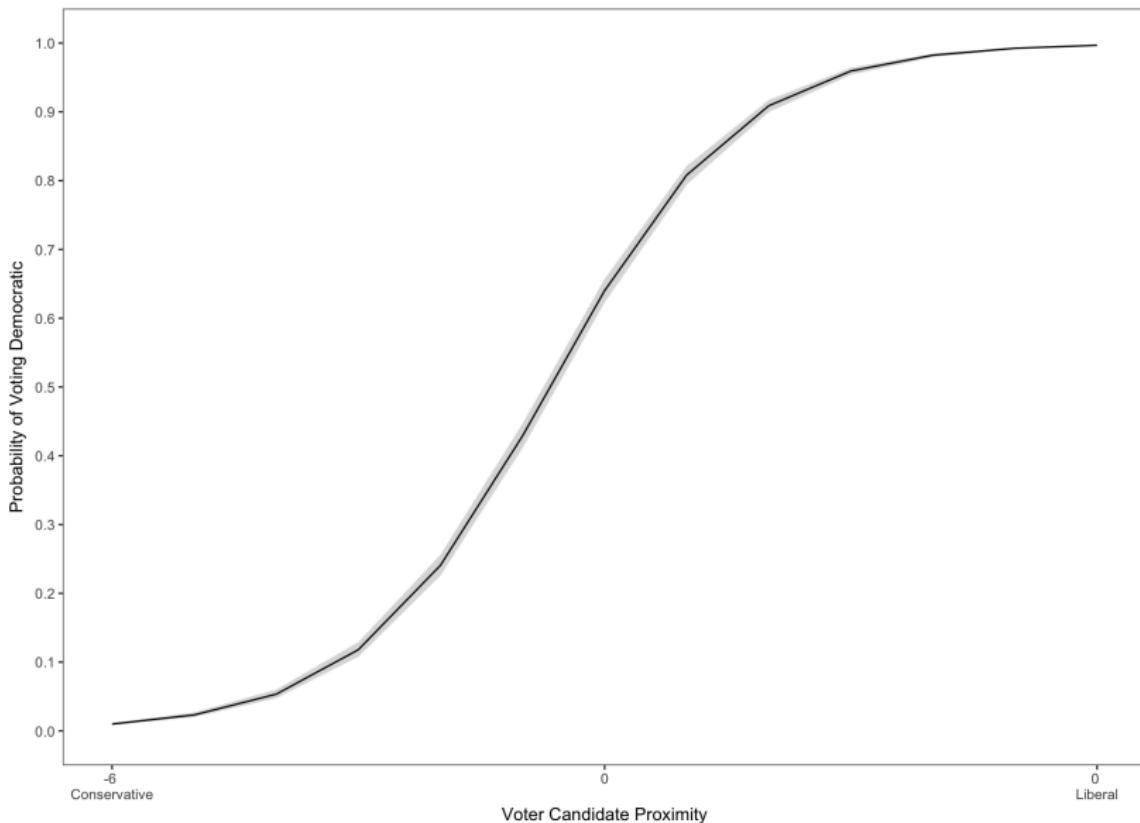
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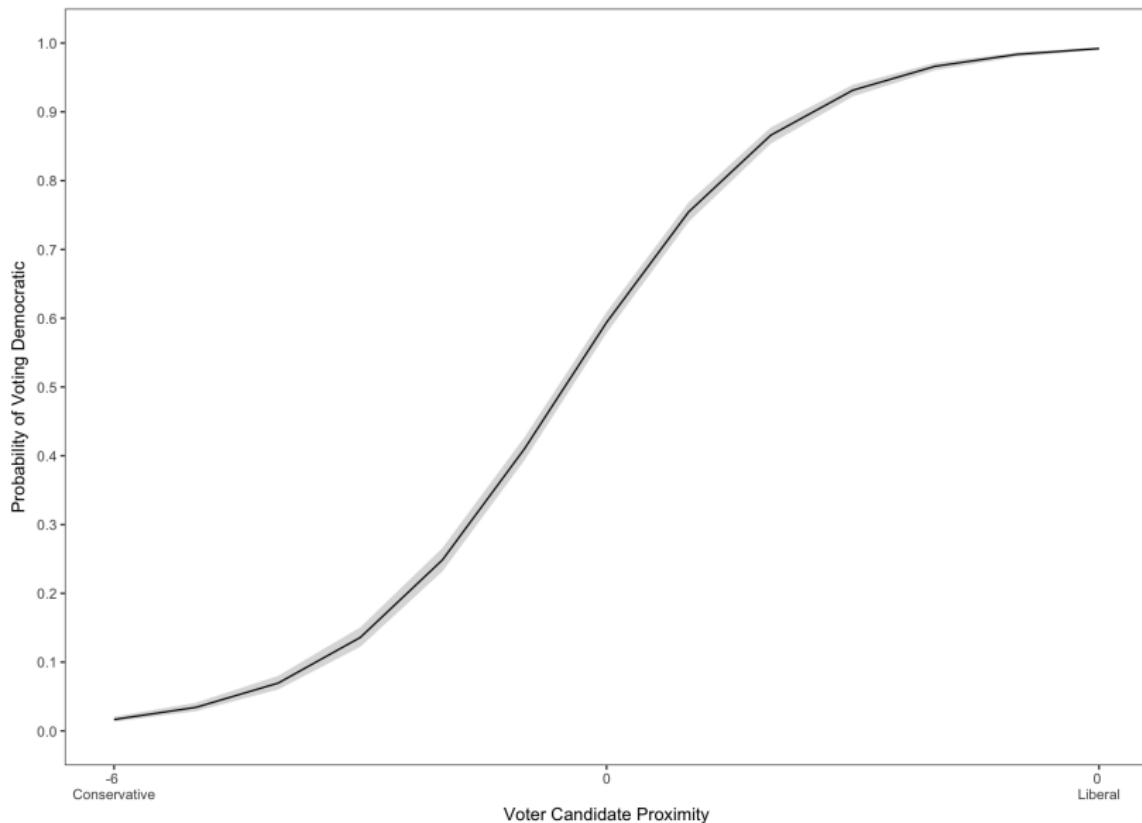
Evidence of Spatial Voting in 2016 Presidential Election

Probability of Voting Democratic by Ideological Proximity & Correct Ideological Placement of Candidates,
2016 Presidential Election (CCES)



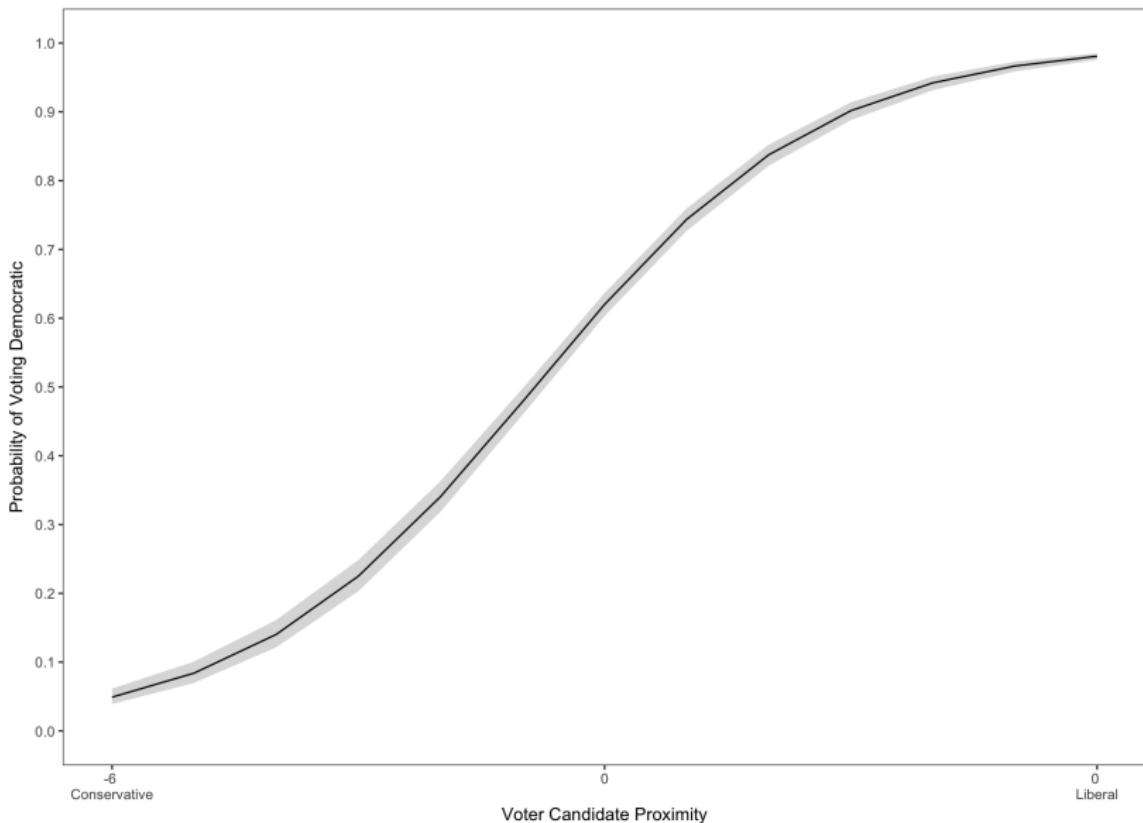
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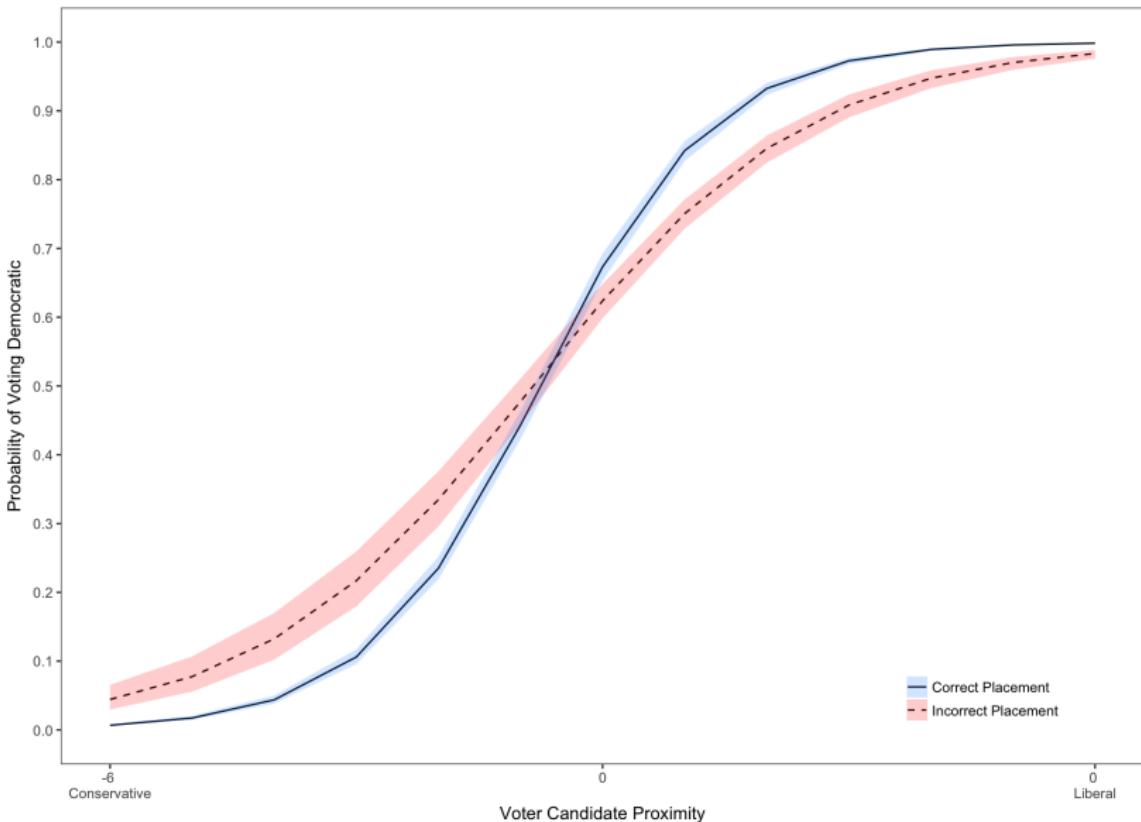
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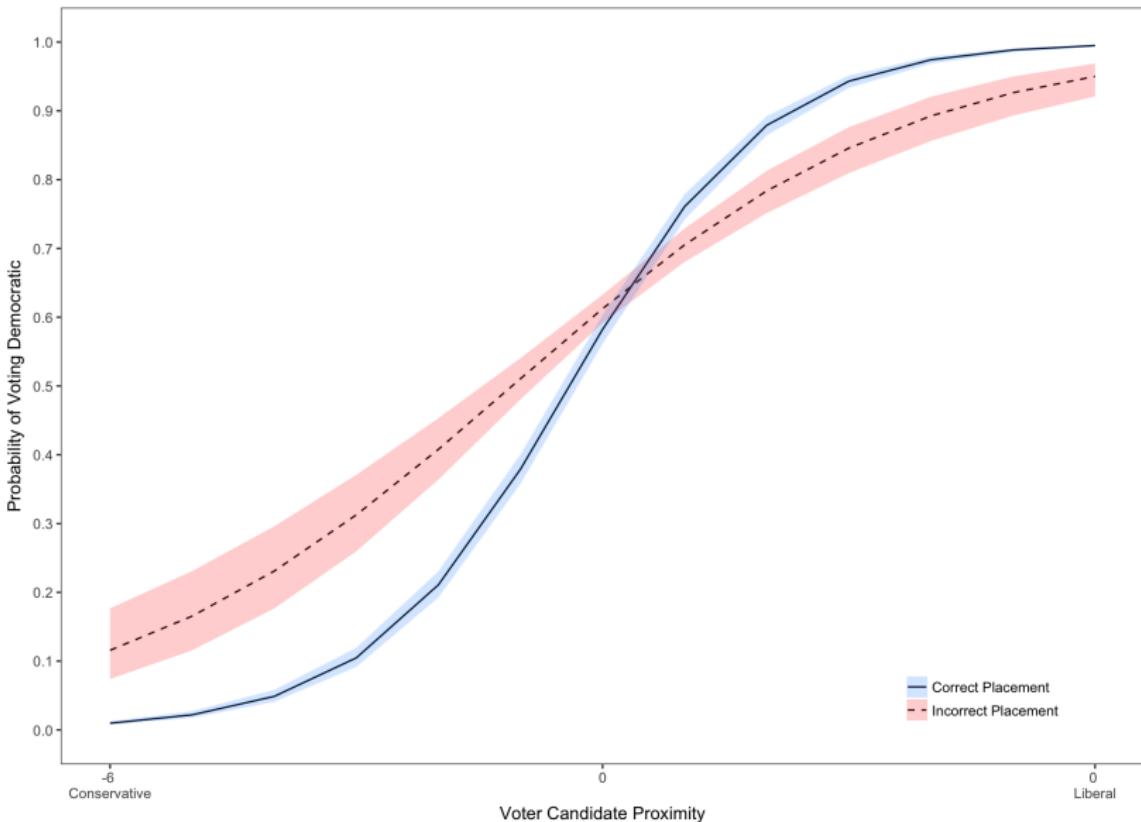
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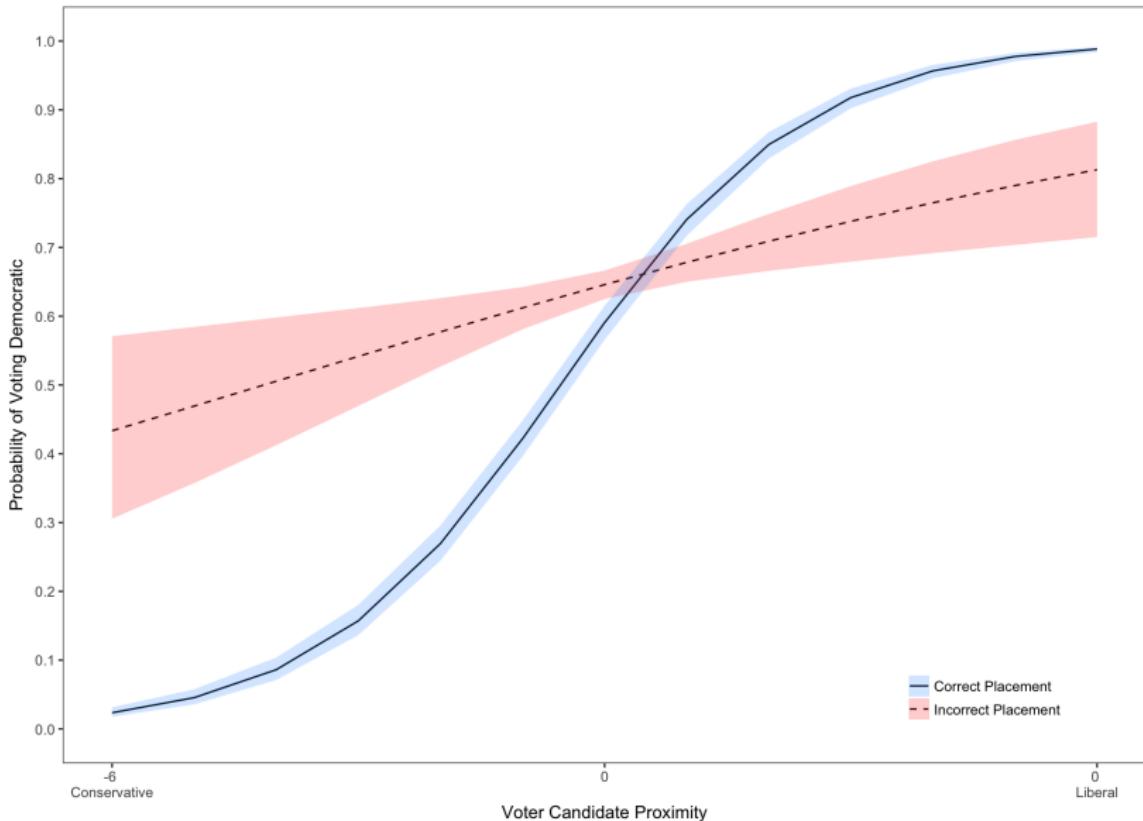
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- ▶ Why would you think there is variation in the effect of ideology on voting different among voters that are able to place candidates "correctly" than those that can't?
- ▶ Under this model, what should candidates in a two-candidate do?
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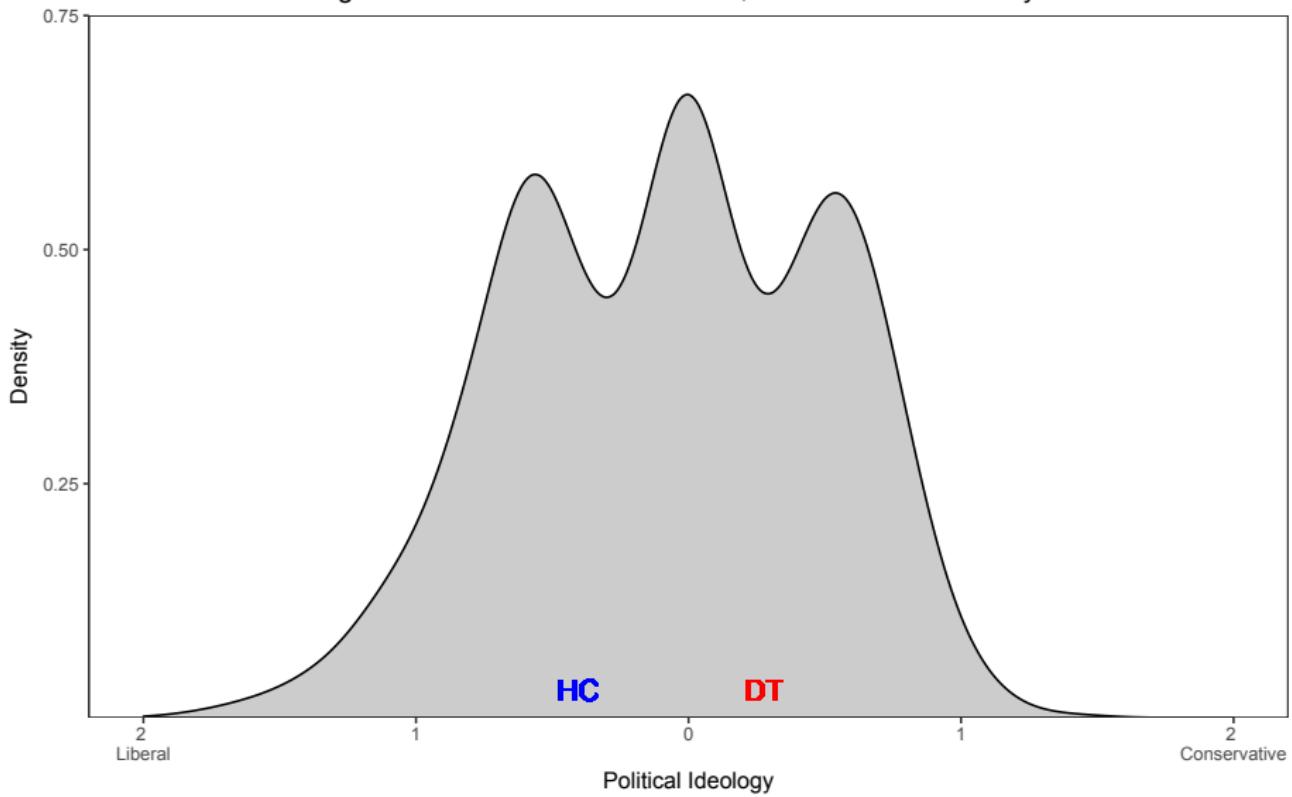
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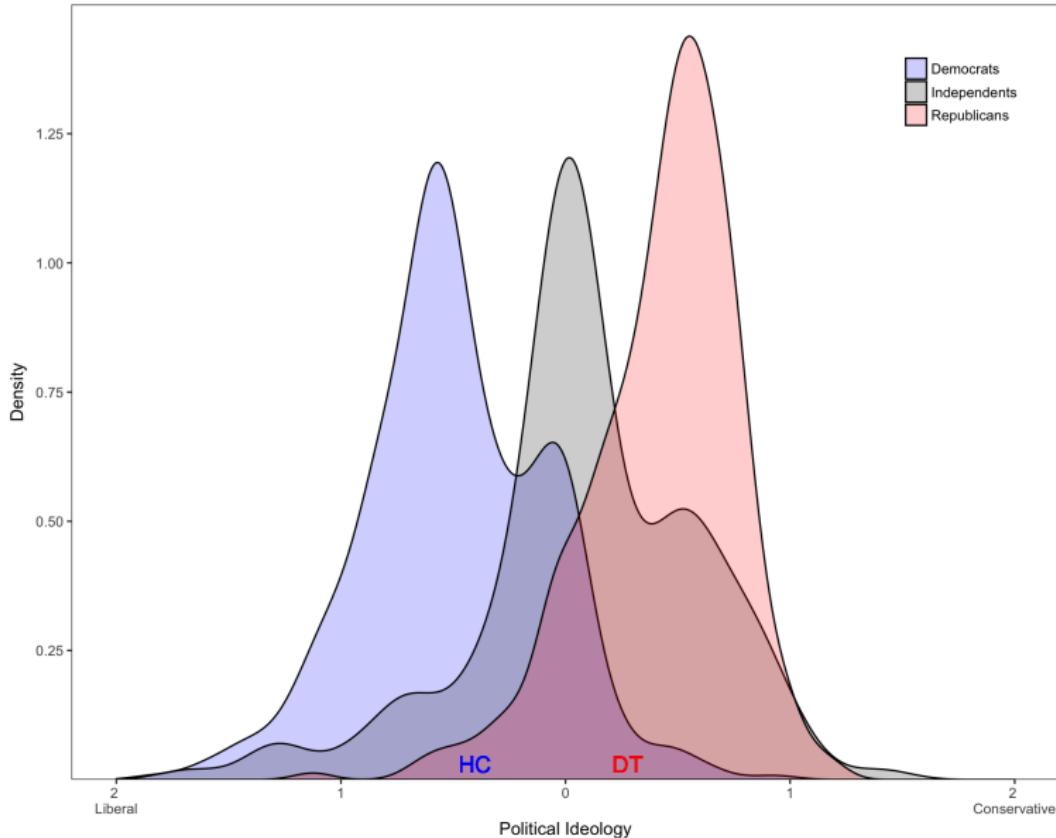
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Distribution of Ideological Preference in the Electorate, 2016 ANES Pilot Study



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Valence-Based Voting: The Case of Iraq

- ▶ Why would the war in Iraq be considered a case to assess the value of “valence” in electoral decision-making?
- ▶ Iraq War → Lower Approval Ratings for President Bush
- ▶ What would we expect to find according to responsible party government?
- ▶ Lower support for congressional Republicans on the basis of voter discontent over the Iraq War
- ▶ Did this happen?

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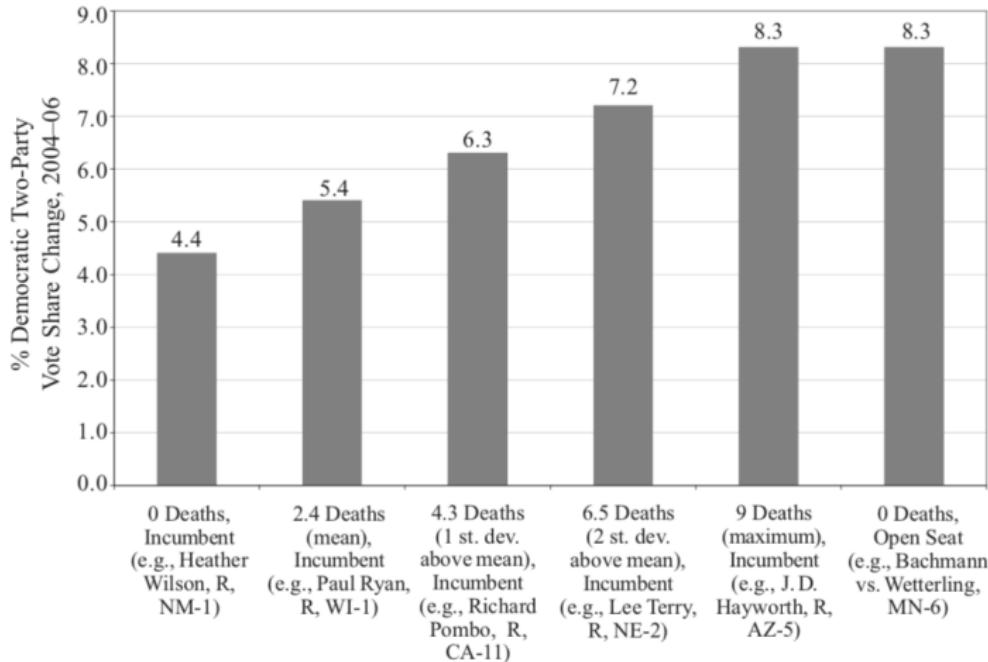
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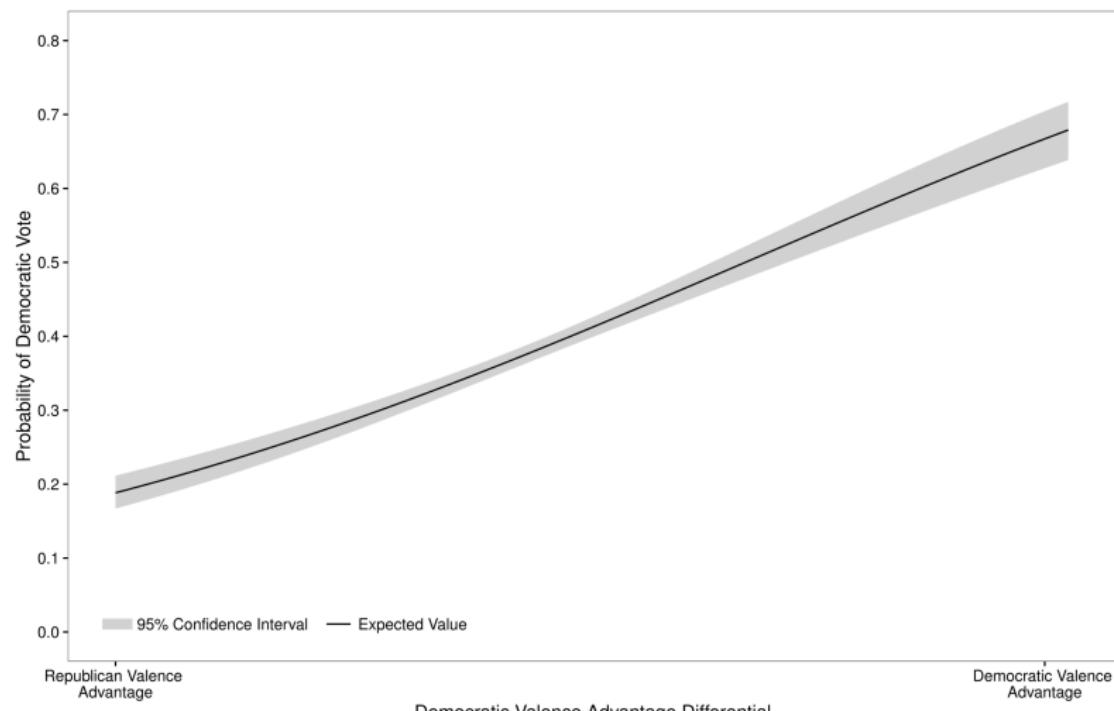
FIGURE 2
Predicted Values of Democratic Swing Percentage, by
Number of Iraq War Fatalities in District, Republican Seats Only
(based on Model 3, Table 3)



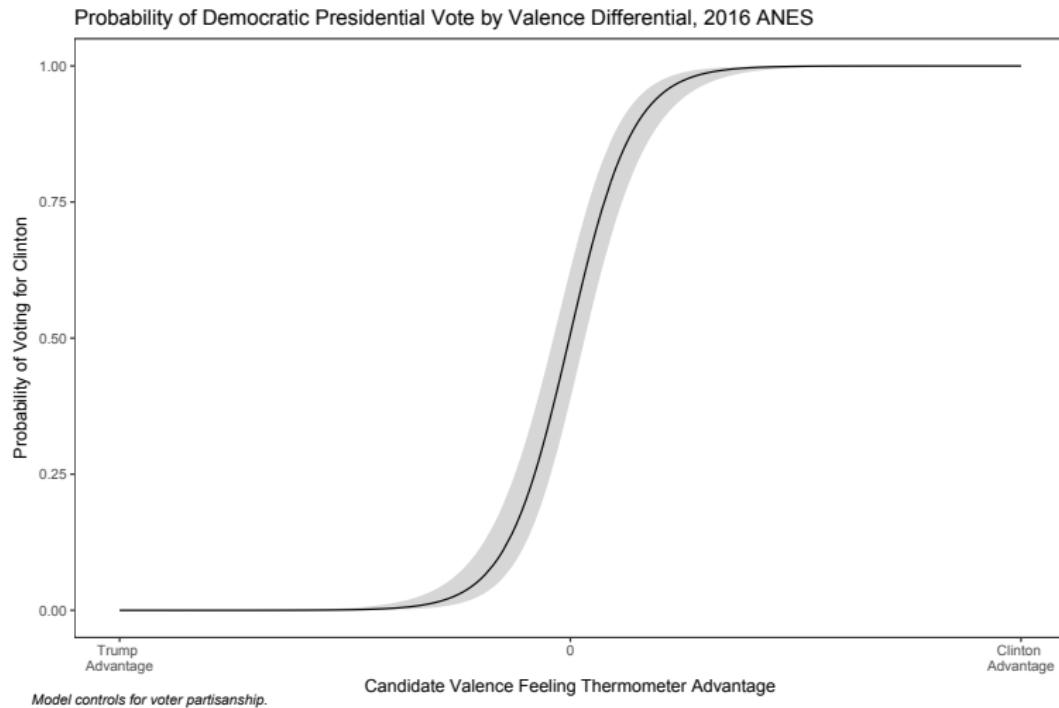
Valence as a Heuristic

- ▶ Non-policy conditions valued by the electorate as a whole
 - ▶ Trustworthy & competent (ability to *solve problems*) politicians
 - ▶ Politicians with integrity & grasp of important issues
- ▶ By definition, valence does not have a policy component to it
- ▶ Requires voters to form opinions about valence considerations
- ▶ Testing the effect of valence in U.S. House & Pres elections
 - ▶ DV: Vote for the Democratic candidate
 - ▶ IV: Difference in valence between the Democratic and Republican candidate
 - ▶ Valence = competency, integrity, trustworthiness, problem solver, issue grasp, qualified for office, public servant
 - ▶ Data: 2010 UC Davis Election Study & 2016 ANES

Evidence of Valence Effect in U.S. House Elections, 2010



Evidence of Valence Effect in 2016 Presidential Election



Key Points

- ① Strong evidence of partisan model of electoral choice across contexts (i.e., presidential, U.S. Senate, & U.S. House)
- ② Spatial model of electoral choice, which utilizes ideology as a choice heuristic, makes two fundamental assumptions about voters
 - ▶ **Assumption 1**, voters have ideological preferences and are able to locate these preferences in the unidimensional ideological space
 - ▶ **Assumption 2**, voters are able to place both candidates running in the ideological space & choose candidates closest to them in ideological proximity
- ③ Strong evidence of the spatial model in congressional elections, but no evidence of convergence to the median voter & thus more extreme electoral outcomes!
- ④ Valence voting prevalent in congressional voting, but subject to partisan bias (serious limitation)