

Parties in the Electorate: Helping Citizens Make Political Decisions at a Trade-off

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November 7, 2017



Agenda

- 1 The Clearer Cue of Partisanship
- 2 More Partisan Voters
- 3 Other Heuristics & Partisanship

PARTISAN OFFICES

STRAIGHT PARTY VOTING

To vote for all candidates from a single party
mark the arrow next to the party name.



Not all parties have nominated candidates for all offices. Marking a straight party vote does not include votes for nonpartisan offices or judges.

DEMOCRATIC PARTY	←	→
REPUBLICAN PARTY	←	→
IOWA GREEN PARTY	←	→
LIBERTARIAN PARTY	←	→

- ▶ Opening Question: How do political parties solve the collective action problem for voters?

Parties Solving Collective Action: Overview

Arena:	Collective Action Problems	Parties Help Solve by:
Electorate	Free riding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rational abstention • Rational ignorance 	Branding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus of collective responsibility • Heuristic; party id. Mobilization
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of politicians' ambition • Getting elected to office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nomination (agenda setting) • Mobilization • Fundraising
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transaction costs for making policy. • Coalition maintenance 	“Long” coalition; ready-made support for party policy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda control and the problem of cycling. • Imagine a President Perot or Bloomberg...or Trump?

General Overview of *Party Theory* relative to Pluralism

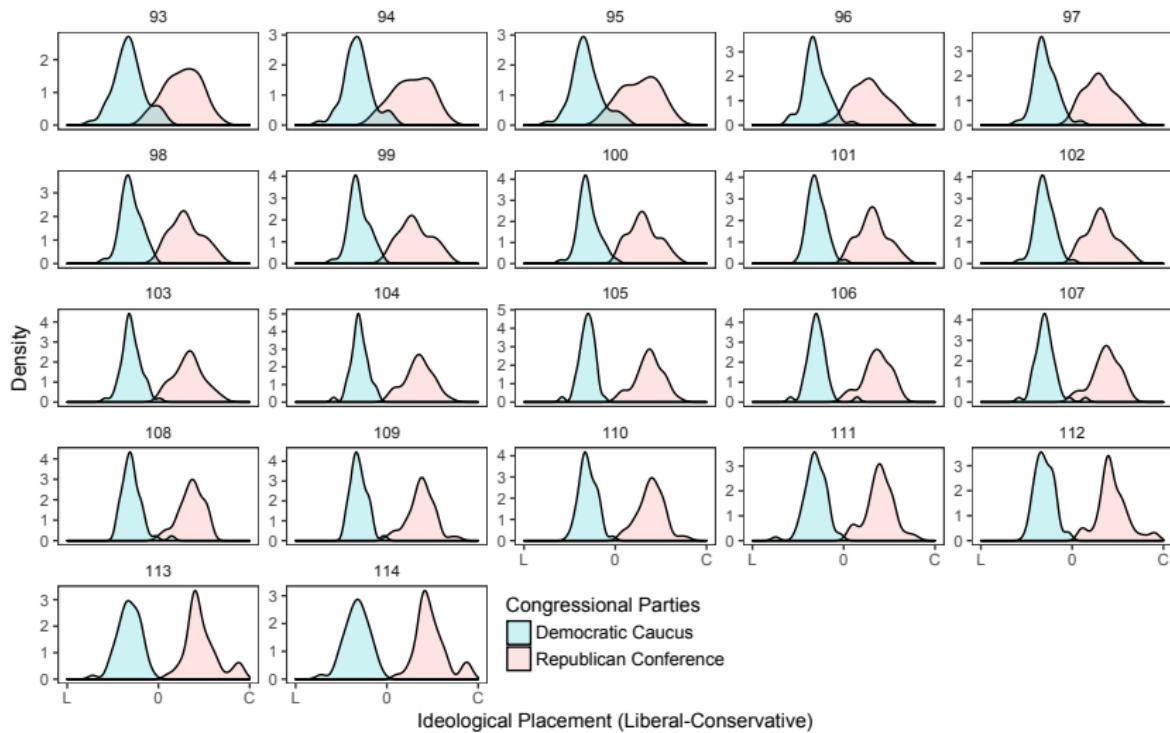
	Pluralist Theory	Party Theory
Focus	Multiplicity of interests; no single interest/resource dominates	Equality (electoral democracy); responsibility
Self-Interest→Representation?	Yes, primarily as byproduct of social and economic interests	Yes, but only <i>IF</i> political self-interest is activated (elections essential and unique)
Governmental Power?	Disperse; multiple points of access	Let the majority rule; accountability
Reform?	No constitutional revision.	Strengthen parties; undo anti-party reforms; constitutional revisions to promote majority rule.

Levendusky: *Benefits of Elite Polarization*

- ▶ What does Levendusky contend as the “stereotypical” American voter with respect to ideological self-interest?
- ▶ Historically, mass public lacked *consistency* of issue beliefs
- ▶ What's Levendusky's main thesis about how elite polarization relates to ability of voters to adopt “more consistent issue beliefs?”
- ▶ Elite divisions over abortion, racial issues, & environmental issues provide voters with more consistent cues
- ▶ Largely centered on racial issues & economic redistribution

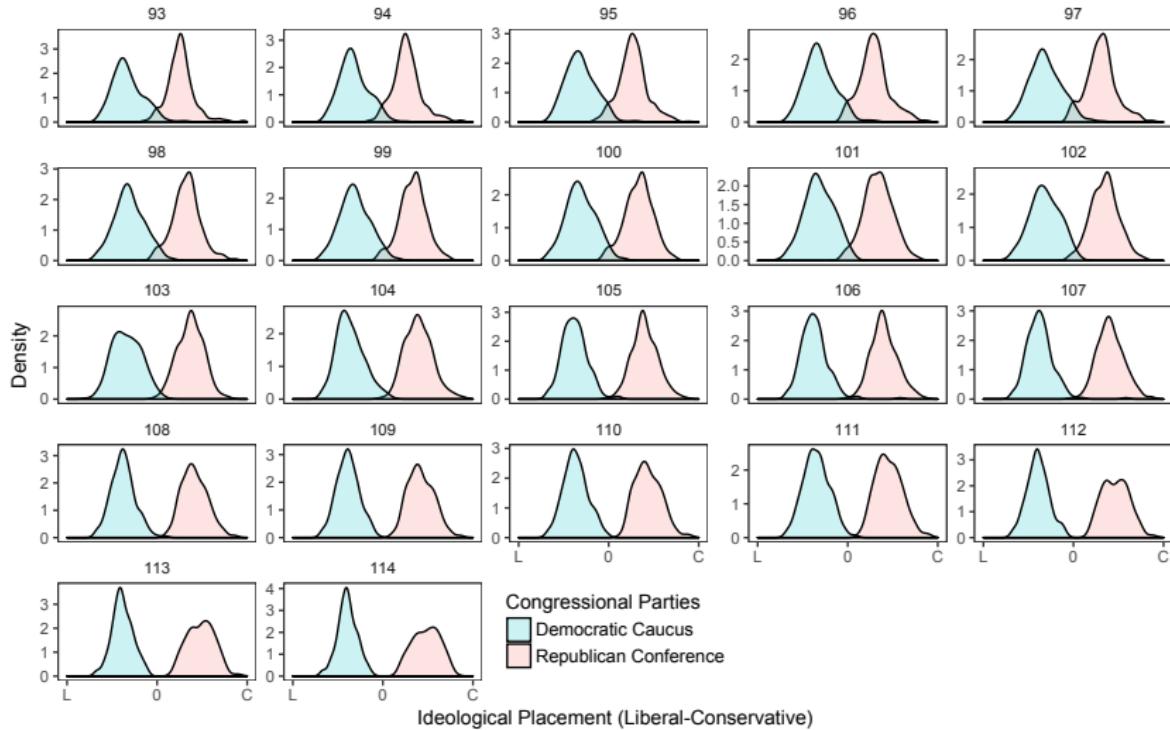
Evidence of Elite Polarization: U.S. House

Distribution of U.S. Senators by Ideological Placement by Congress, 1974-2016



Evidence of Elite Polarization: U.S. Senate

Distribution of U.S. Representatives by Ideological Placement by Congress, 1974-2016



Levendusky's Experiment: ↑ Polarization ↑ Consistency

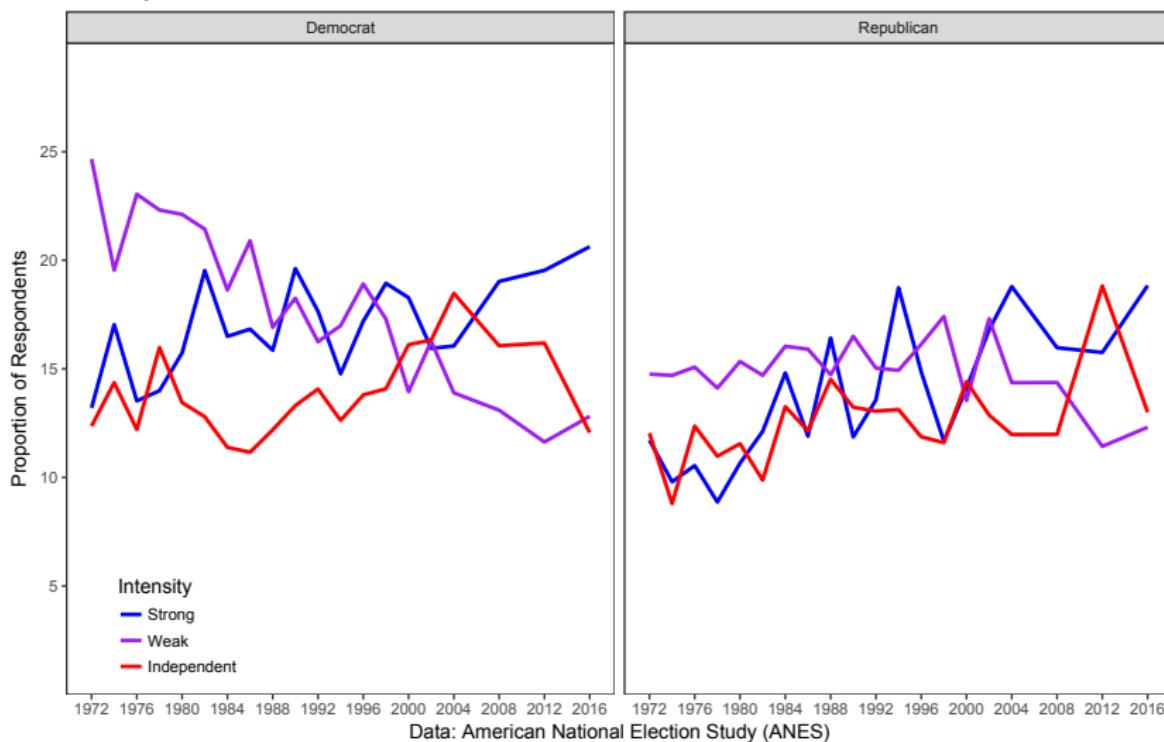
- ▶ Voters rely on elites for cues on party policy positions & updating mass beliefs
- ▶ Why does Levendusky choose to do an experiment rather than rely on observational data?
- ▶ Isolate the mechanism (effect) of elite polarization by manipulating the elite cue
- ▶ Two treatment conditions: moderate or polarized elite cue
- ▶ Voters more likely to follow elite cue on policy position (i.e. adopt position) if the cue is polarized
- ▶ Voters adopt more “consistent” positions when elites are polarized (benefit of polarization)
- ▶ Can you think of a cost of this “benefit” of elite polarization?

More Partisan & *Consistent* Voters

- ▶ What sort of picture does Bafumi & Shapiro paint of the American voter in the 1950's & 1960's?
- ▶ Again, inconsistent voters & weak partisan ties, why?
- ▶ They contend due to bipartisan agreement on “on an enlarged American welfare state compared to the pre-New Deal era and a Cold War consensus in foreign policy.”
- ▶ Why would this weaken partisan attachment by voters?
- ▶ What do they contend happened to the American voter since the 1960's?
- ▶ Greater partisan attachment & anchoring on left-right continuum on economic, social, & religious issues

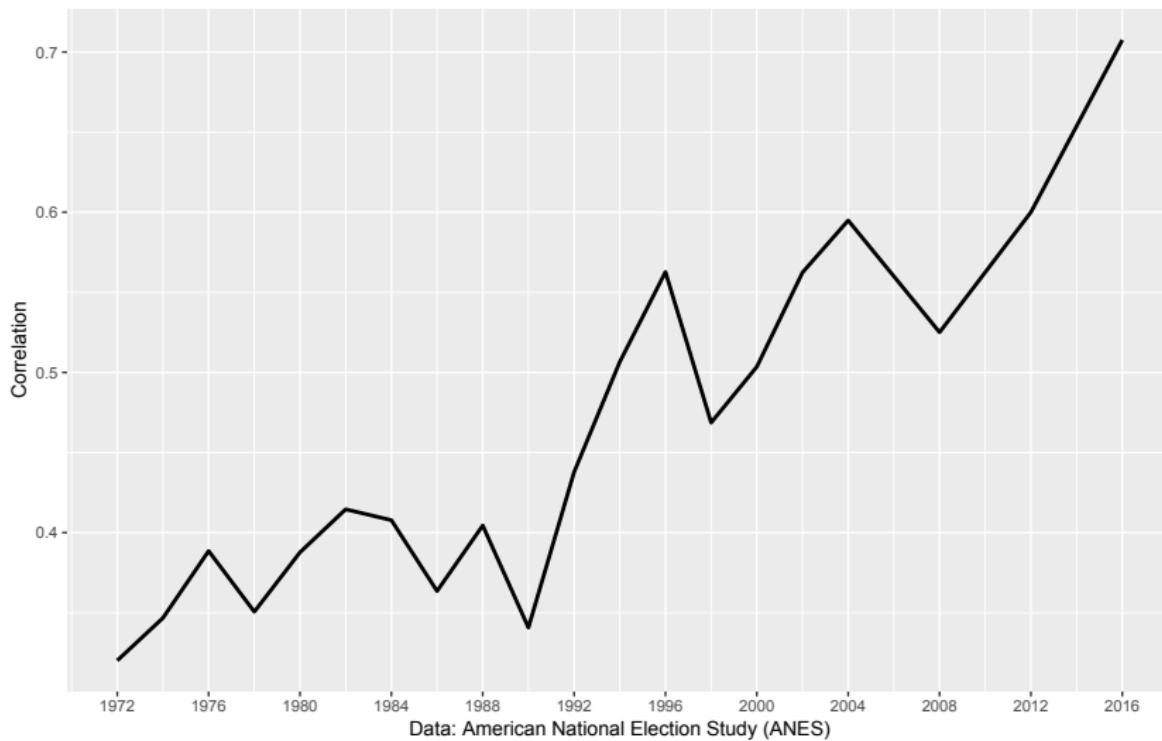
Resurgent Partisanship: Replicating Bafumi & Shapiro

Intensity of Partisan Preferences in the American Electorate, 1972-2016



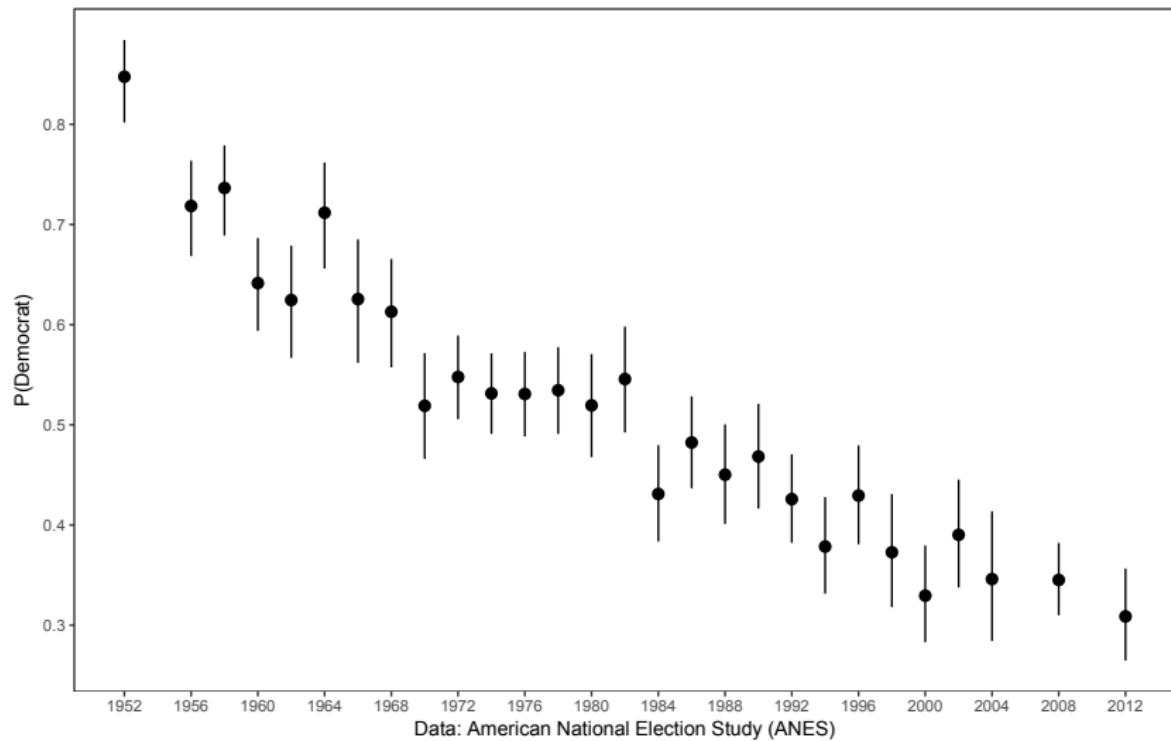
Greater Congruence with Ideological Preferences

Correlation between Partisanship & Ideological Preferences, 1972-2016

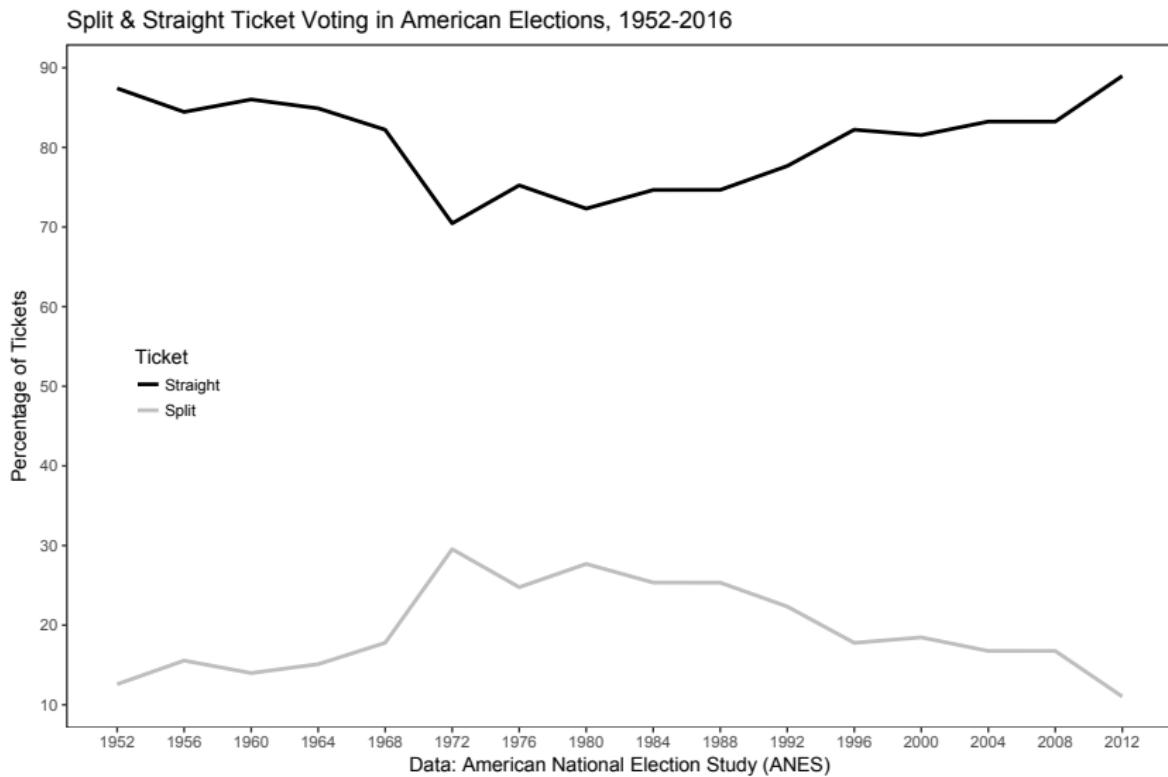


Decline of the Southern Democratic Wing

Probability of Identifying as a Democrat among Southern White Voters, 1952-2016

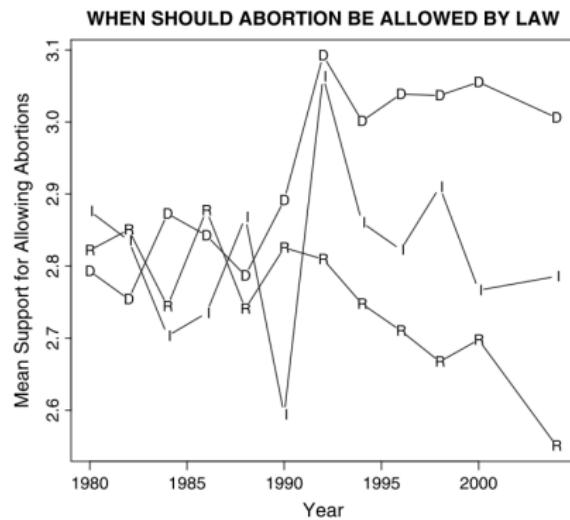
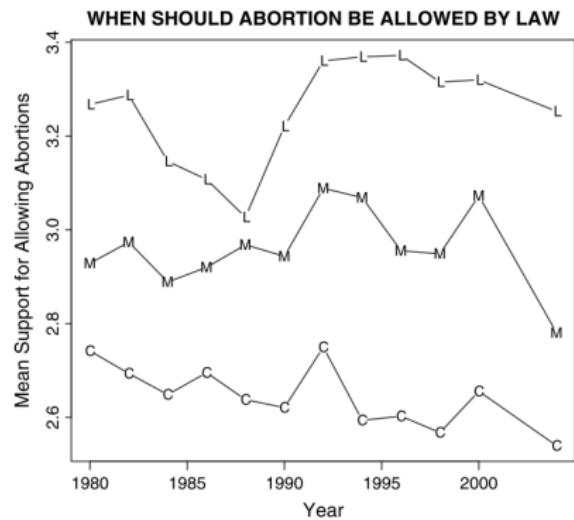


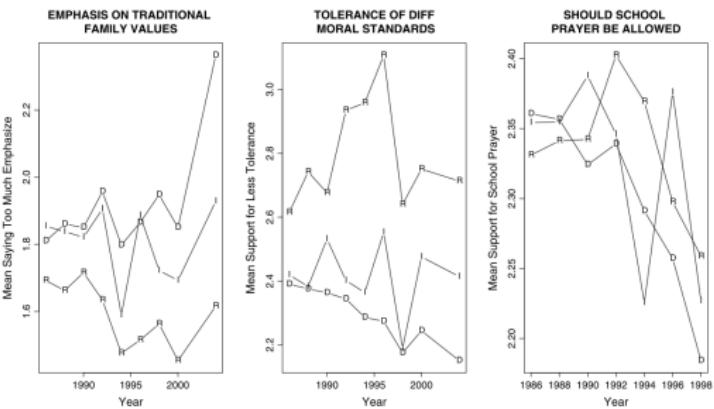
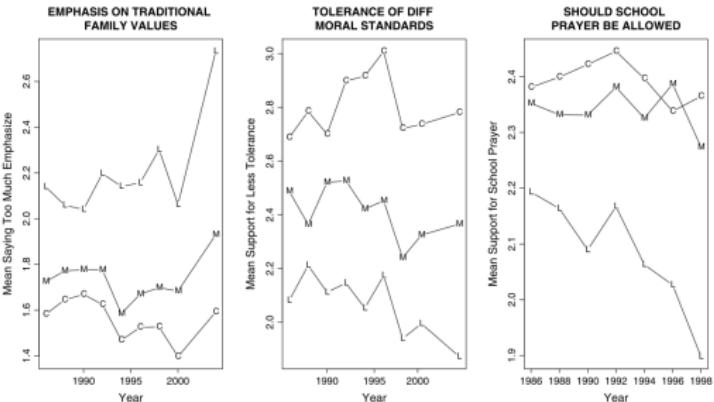
Decline of Split Ticket Voting



Greater Emphasis on Left-Right Spectrum

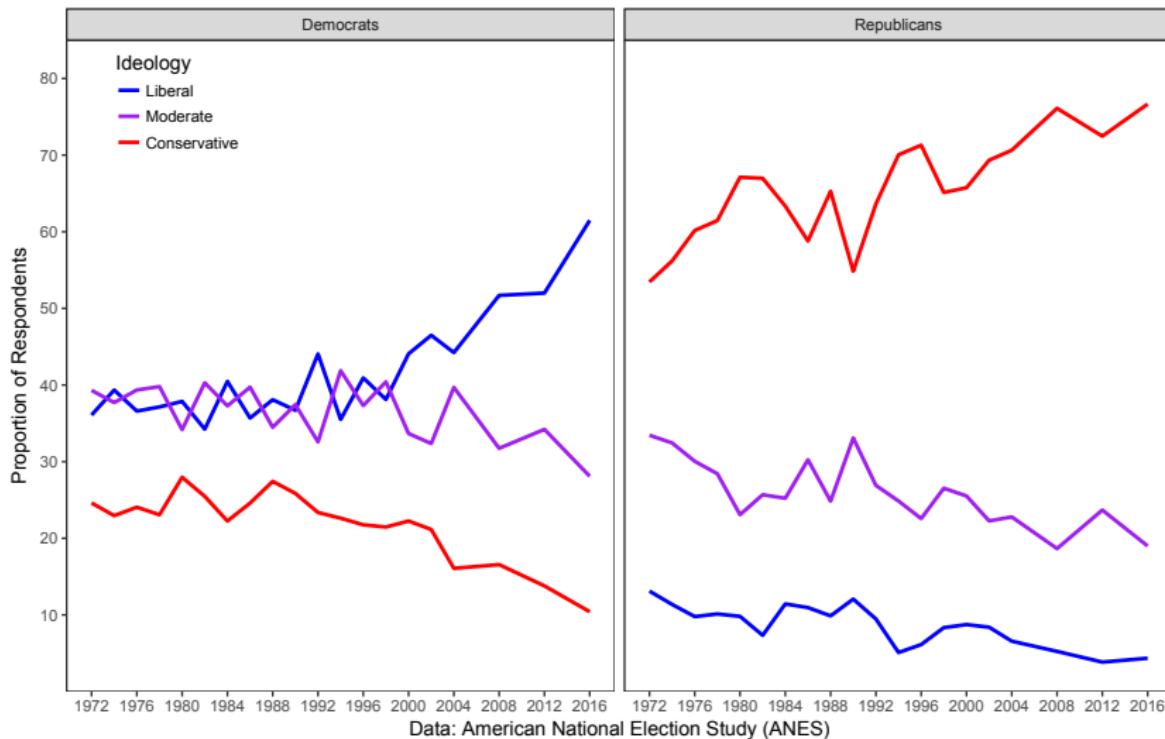
FIGURE 8 Mean position of conservatives/moderate/liberal and Republicans/Independents/Democrats on whether abortion should be legal. Source: NES Cumulative File.





Greater Ideological Consistency in Both Parties

Ideological Preferences by Voter Self-Reported Partisan Affiliation, 1972-2016



Strong Relationship between Vote-Choice & Ideology/Party

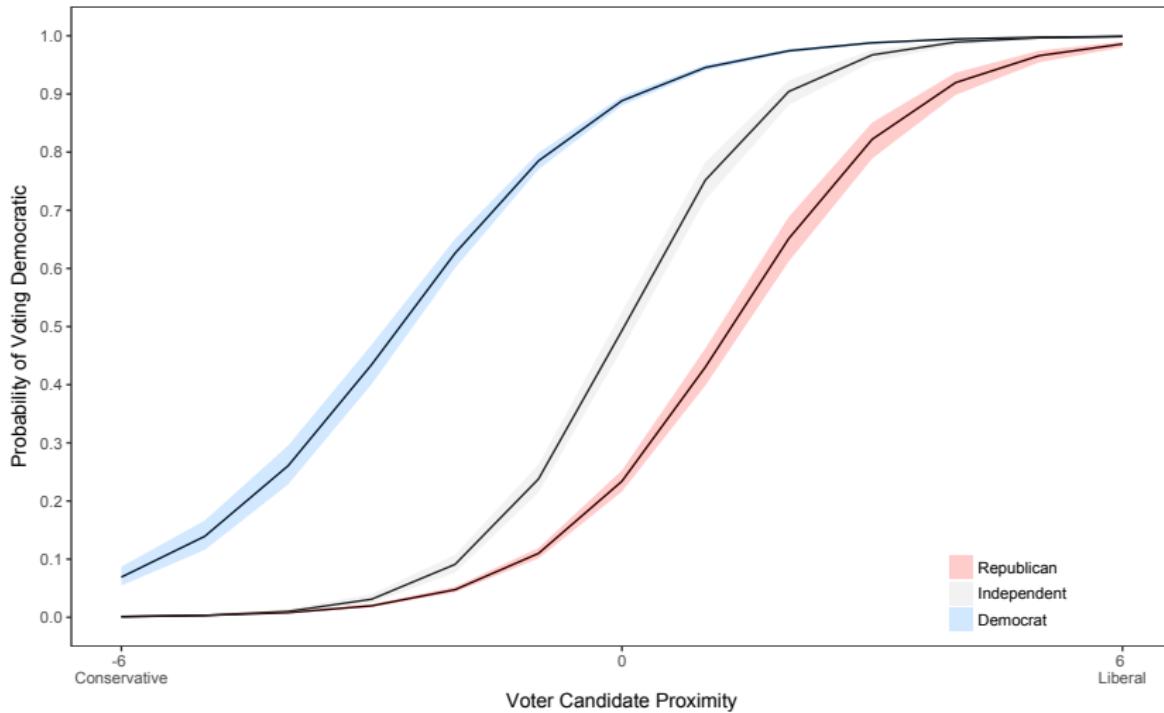
Percent Voting for Obama by Ideology & Party, 2012

<i>Partisanship</i>	<i>Ideology</i>			
	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	DK
Democrat	97.2%	87.6%	83.7%	92.2%
Independent	70.5%	63.0%	23.2%	30.6%
Republican	26.1%	14.6%	4.5%	17.4%

Data: 2012 American National Election Study

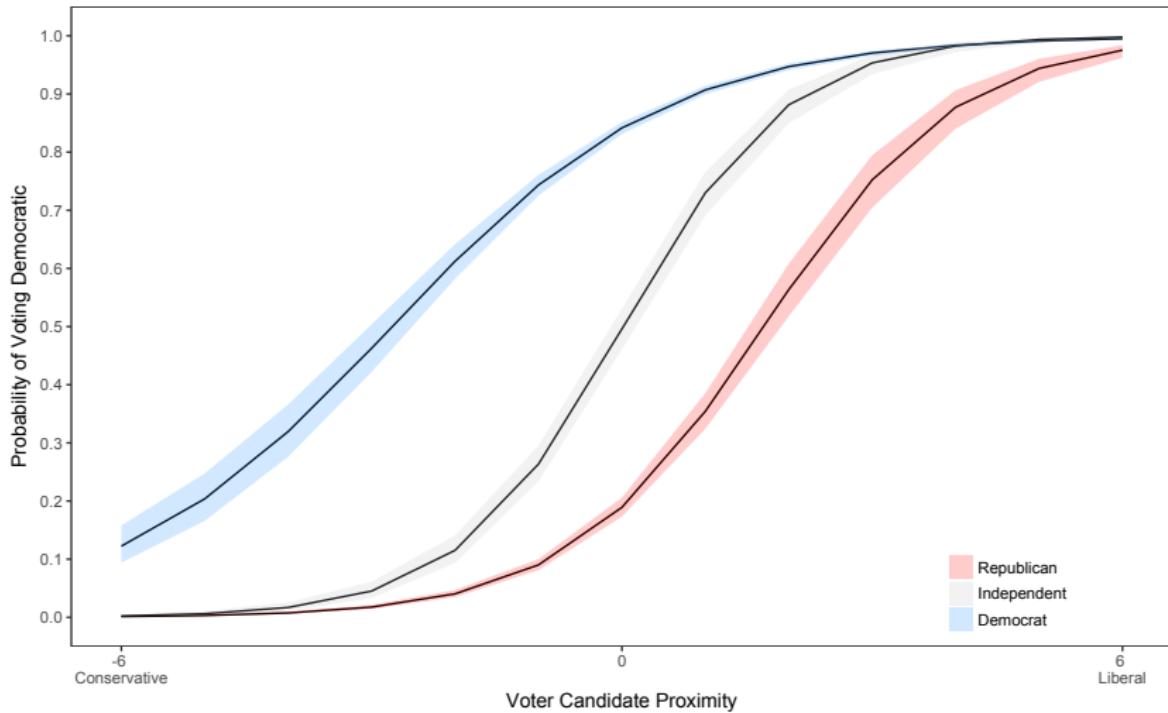
Party ID & Proximity Voting in Presidential Elections

Probability of Voting Democratic by Ideological Proximity & Partisanship,
2016 Presidential Election (CCES)



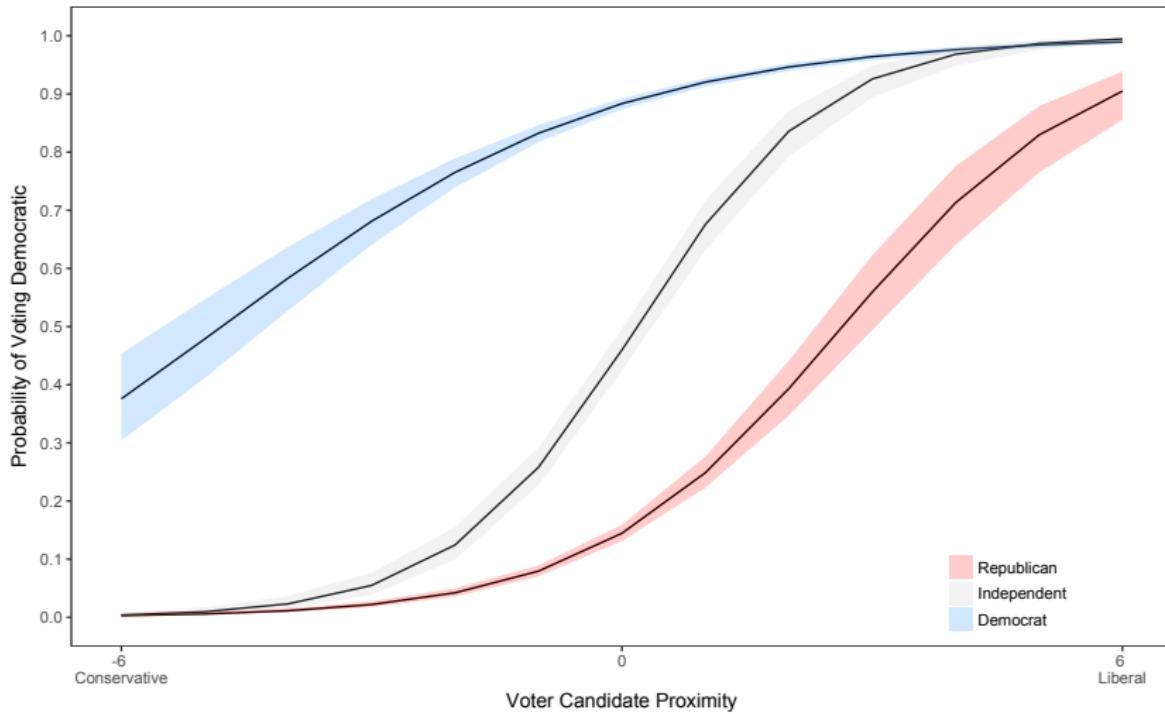
Party ID & Proximity Voting in Senate Elections

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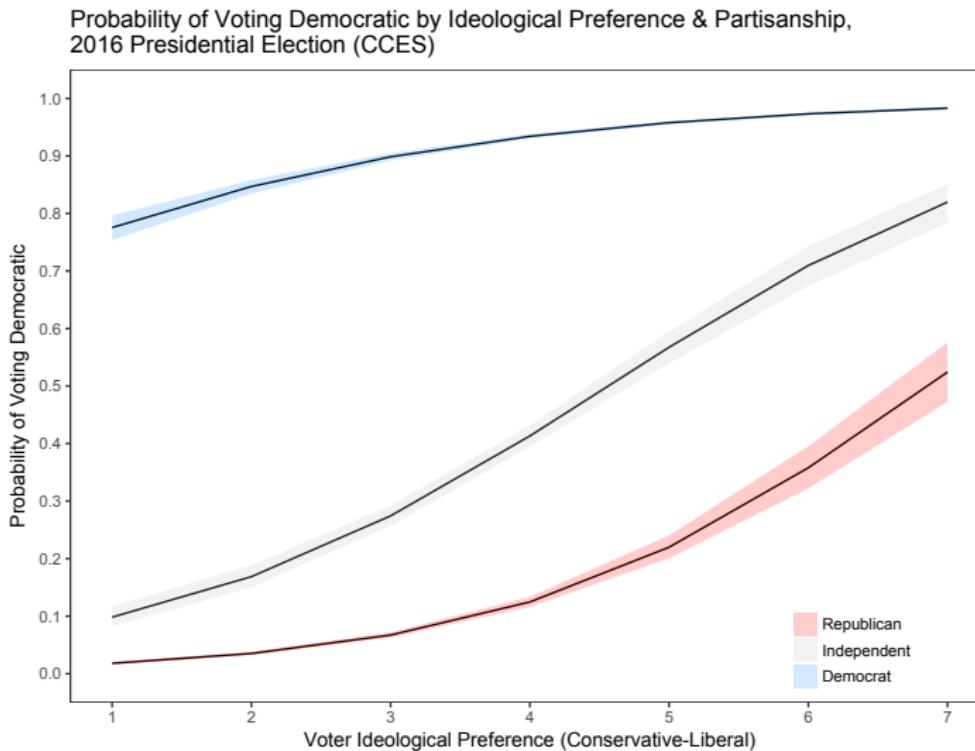


Party ID & Proximity Voting in House Elections

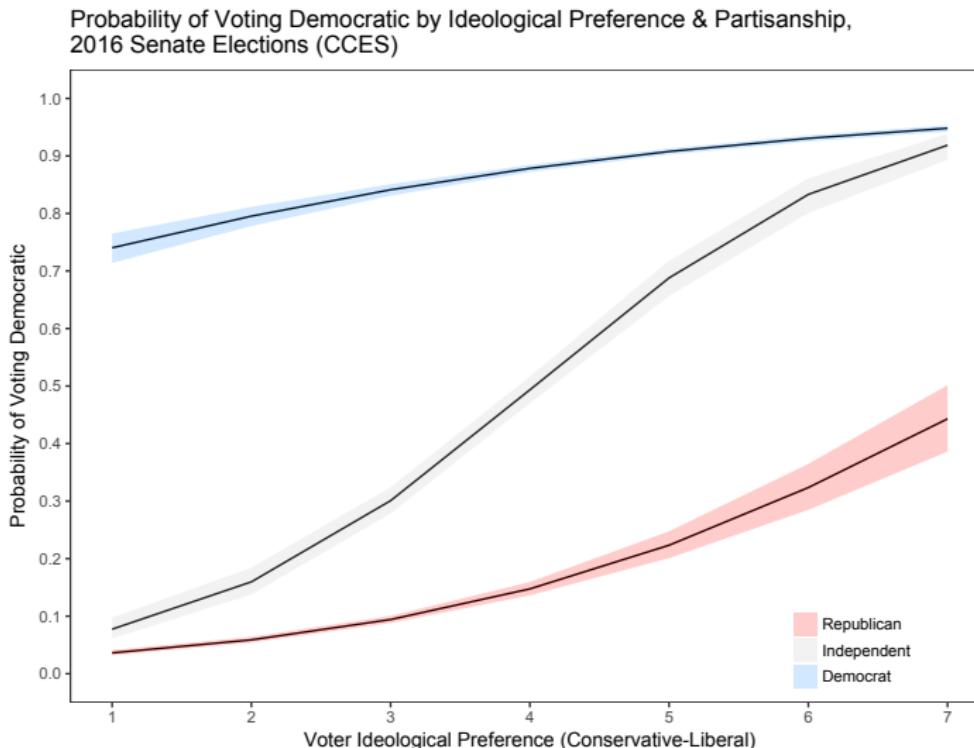
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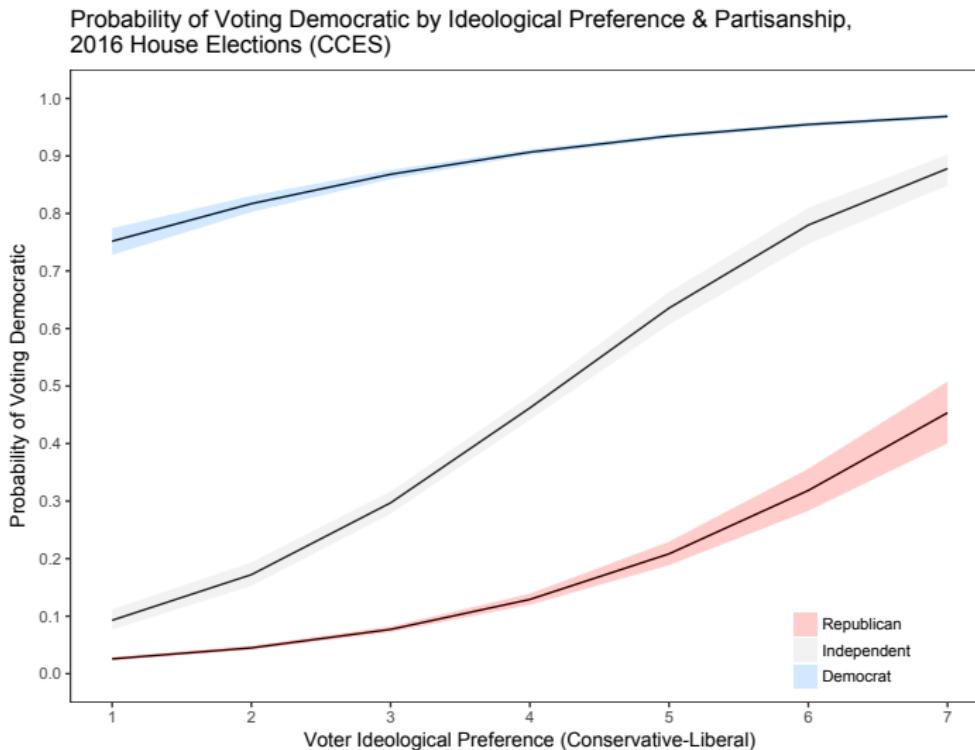
Party ID & Ideological Voting in Presidential Elections



Party ID & Ideological Voting in Senate Elections



Party ID & Ideological Voting in House Elections



Partisanship & “Correct” Proximity Voting

Party ID & Proximity Voting, 2016 Presidential Election

<i>Condition</i>	% of Sample	% Casting Proximity Vote
Party ID & Proximity Overlap	94.11%	97.78%
Strict Independents	16.81%	90.37%
Party ID & Proximity Conflict	5.89%	2.22%

Data: 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Study

Partisanship & “Correct” Proximity Voting

Party ID & Proximity Voting, 2016 Senate Elections

<i>Condition</i>	% of Sample	% Casting Proximity Vote
Party ID & Proximity Overlap	91.04%	96.75%
Strict Independents	16.81%	86.45%
Party ID & Proximity Conflict	8.97%	3.25%

Data: 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Study

Partisanship & “Correct” Proximity Voting

Party ID & Proximity Voting, 2016 House Elections

<i>Condition</i>	% of Sample	% Casting Proximity Vote
Party ID & Proximity Overlap	87.89%	97.25%
Strict Independents	16.81%	83.46%
Party ID & Proximity Conflict	12.11%	2.76%

Data: 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Study

Key Points:

- ▶ Parties help solve collective action in the electoral arena by providing voters with a focus on collective responsibility (through party brand) & partisan heuristic ↓ transaction costs to voting
- ▶ Levendusky finds evidence ↑ elite (partisan polarization) = ↑ consistency of issue beliefs (ideology)
- ▶ Parties are becoming more polarized & voters more partisan (intensity)
- ▶ Greater ideological consistency in both political parties (voters), decline of conservative Democrats & Liberal Republicans
- ▶ Strong relationship between vote-choice & ideological/partisan preferences (preferences highly correlated)
- ▶ When PID & ideological proximity (spatial model) overlap, voters cast “correct” votes