

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

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# Agenda

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

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## 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 in the Electorate

## Political Parties and Problems of Collective Action

Arena:	Collective Action Problems	Parties Help Solve by:
Electorate	<p>Free riding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rational abstention</li><li>• Rational ignorance</li></ul>	<p>Branding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus of collective responsibility</li><li>• Heuristic; party id.</li></ul> <p>Mobilization</p>

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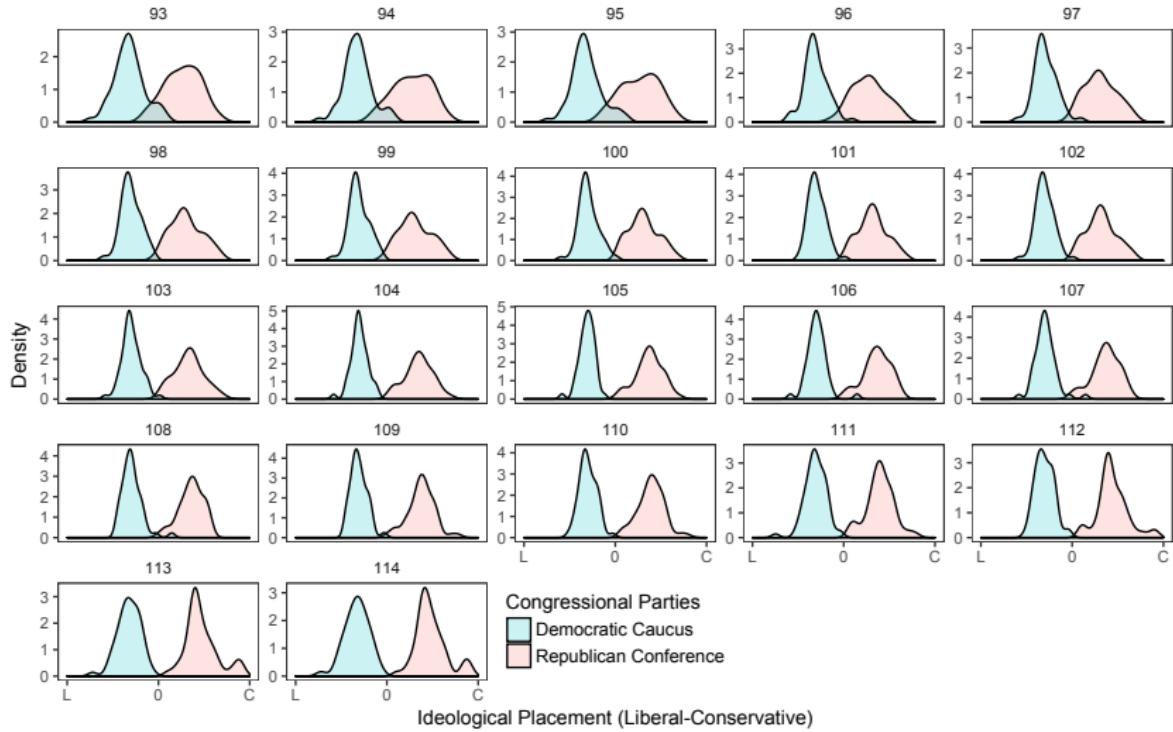
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- ▶ What's Levendusky's main thesis about how elite polarization relates to ability of voters to adopt “more consistent issue beliefs?”
- ▶ Elite divisions over abortion, racial issues, & environmental issues provide voters with more consistent cues
- ▶ Largely centered on racial issues & economic redistribution

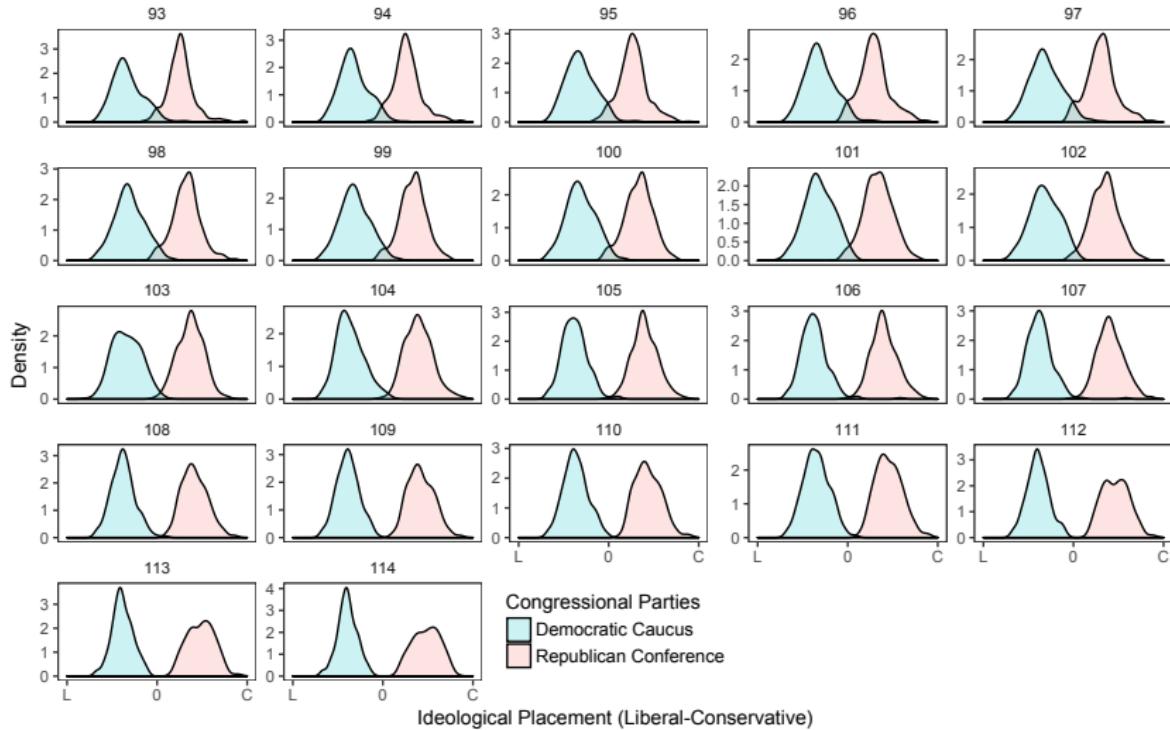
# Evidence of Elite Polarization: U.S. House

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



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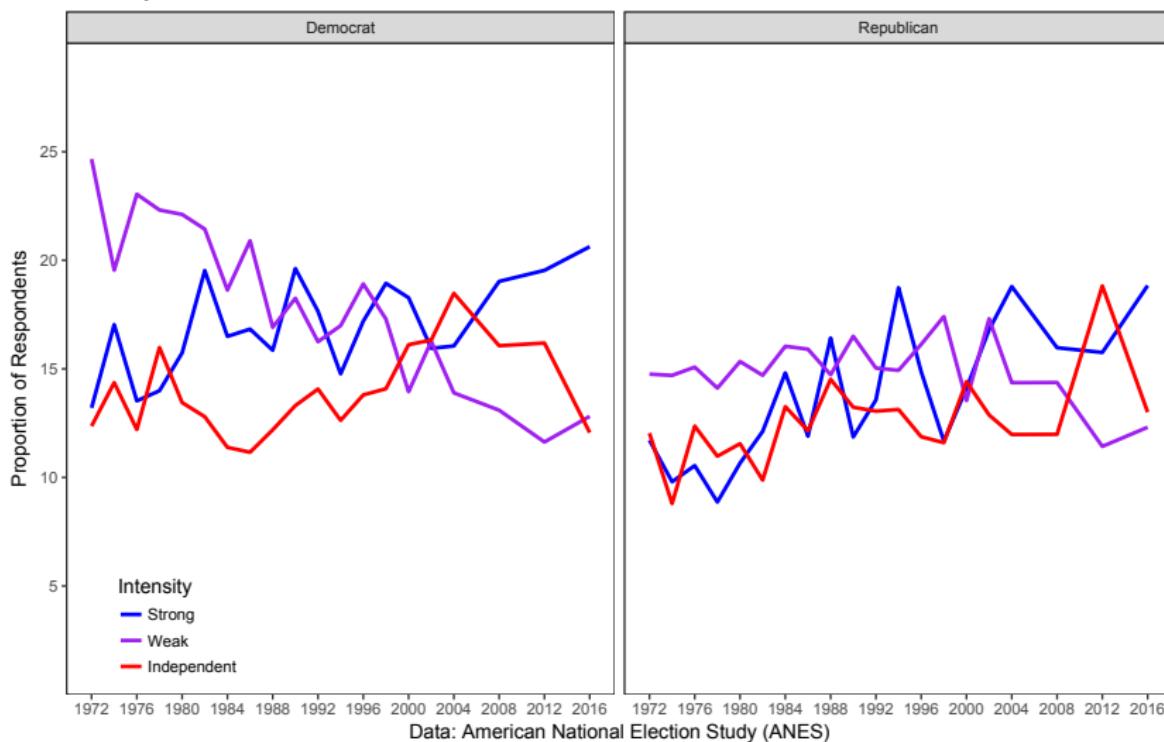
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- ▶ Can you think of a cost of this “benefit” of elite polarization?

## 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

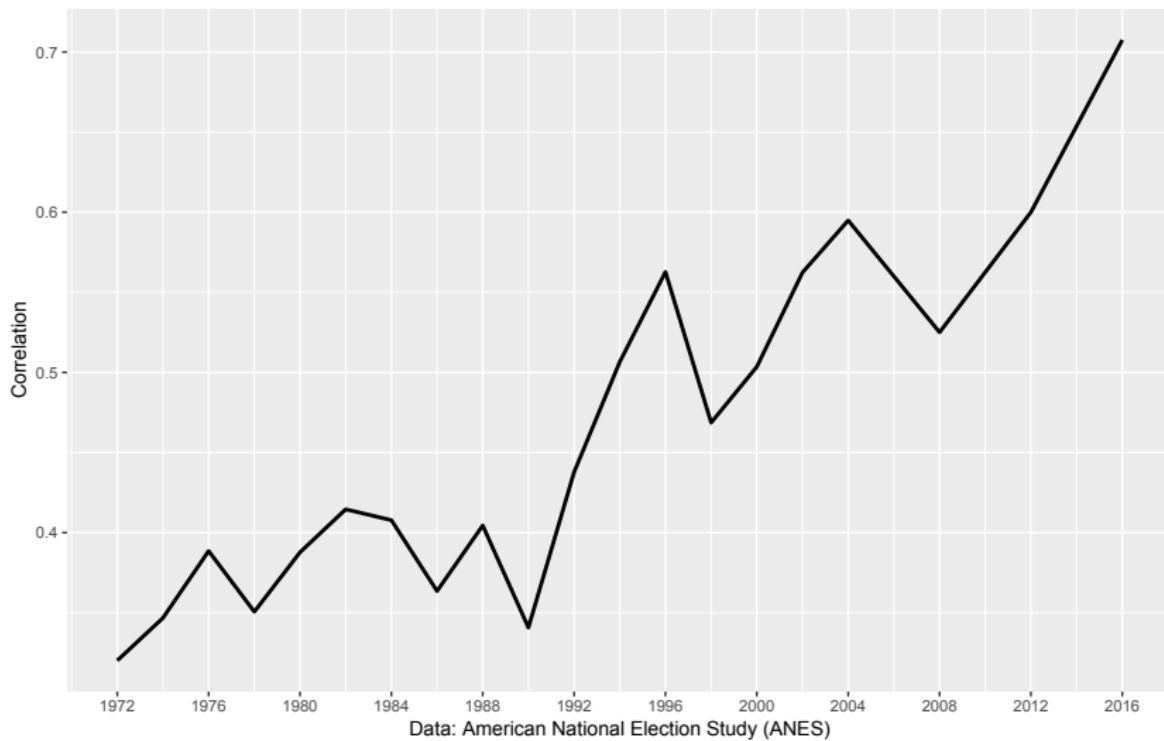
# Resurgent Partisanship: Replicating Bafumi & Shapiro

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



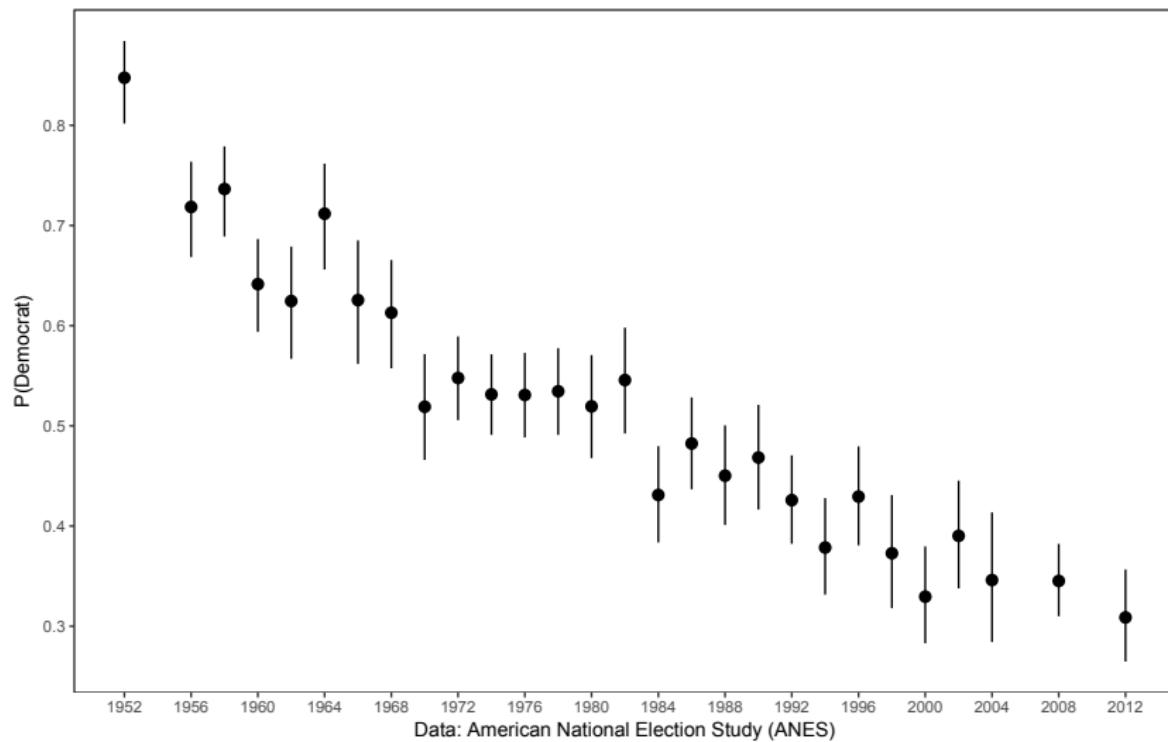
# Greater Congruence with Ideological Preferences

Correlation between Partisanship & Ideological Preferences, 1972-2016

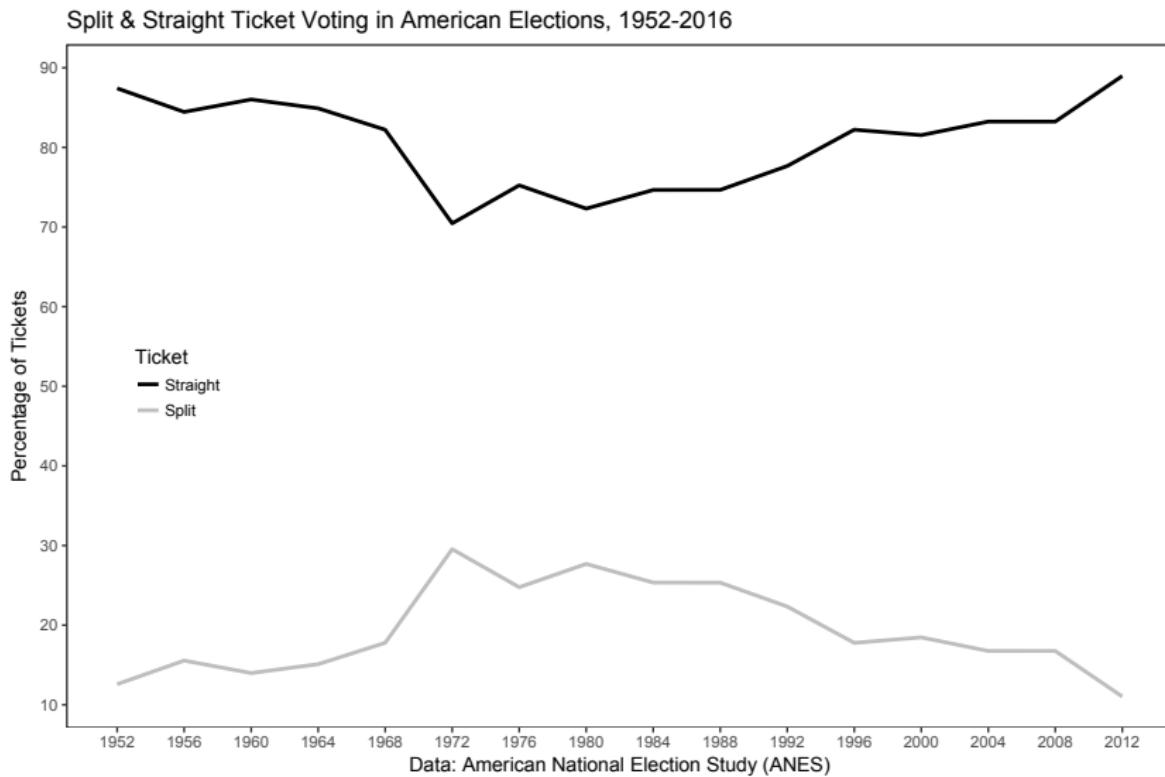


# Decline of the Southern Democratic Wing

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

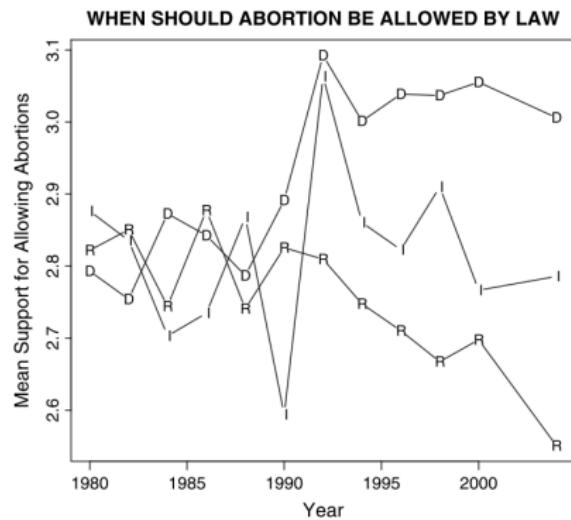


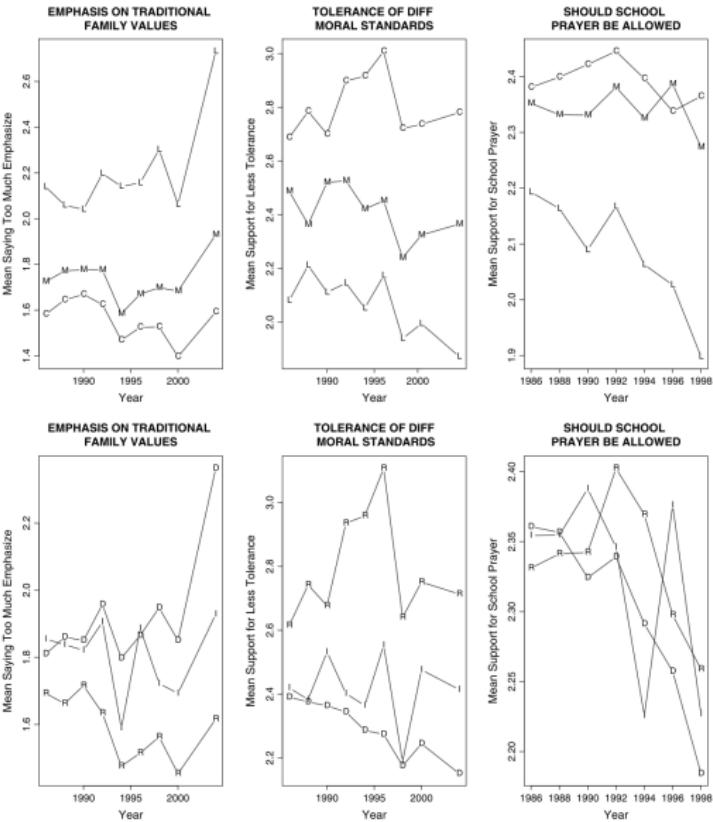
# Decline of Split Ticket Voting



# Greater Emphasis on Left-Right Spectrum

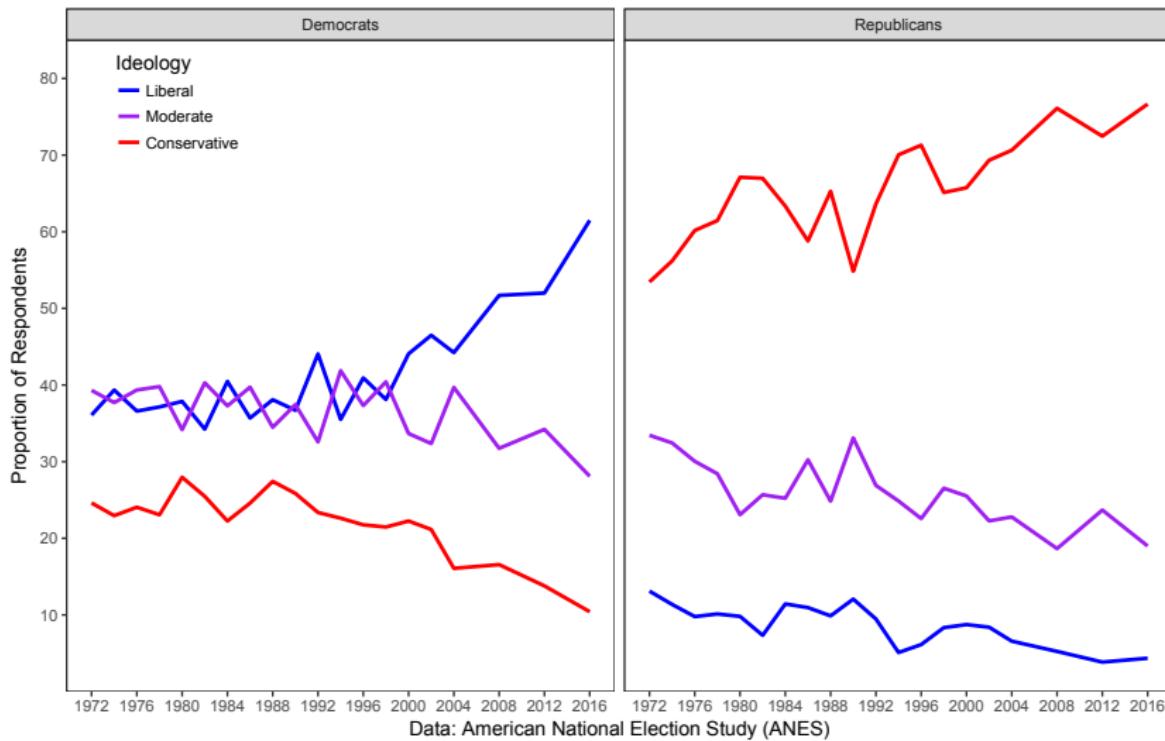
**FIGURE 8** Mean position of conservatives/moderate/liberal and Republicans/Independents/Democrats on whether abortion should be legal. Source: NES Cumulative File.





# Greater Ideological Consistency in Both Parties

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



# Strong Relationship between Vote-Choice & Ideology/Party

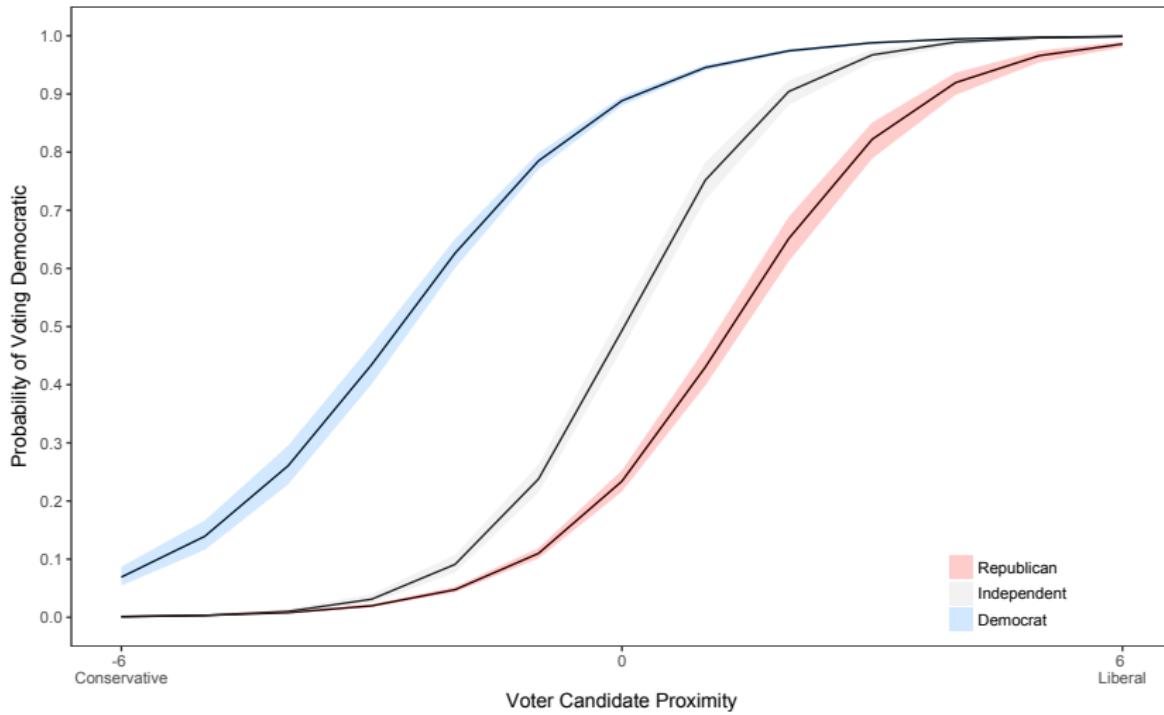
*Percent Voting for Obama by Ideology & Party, 2012*

<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*

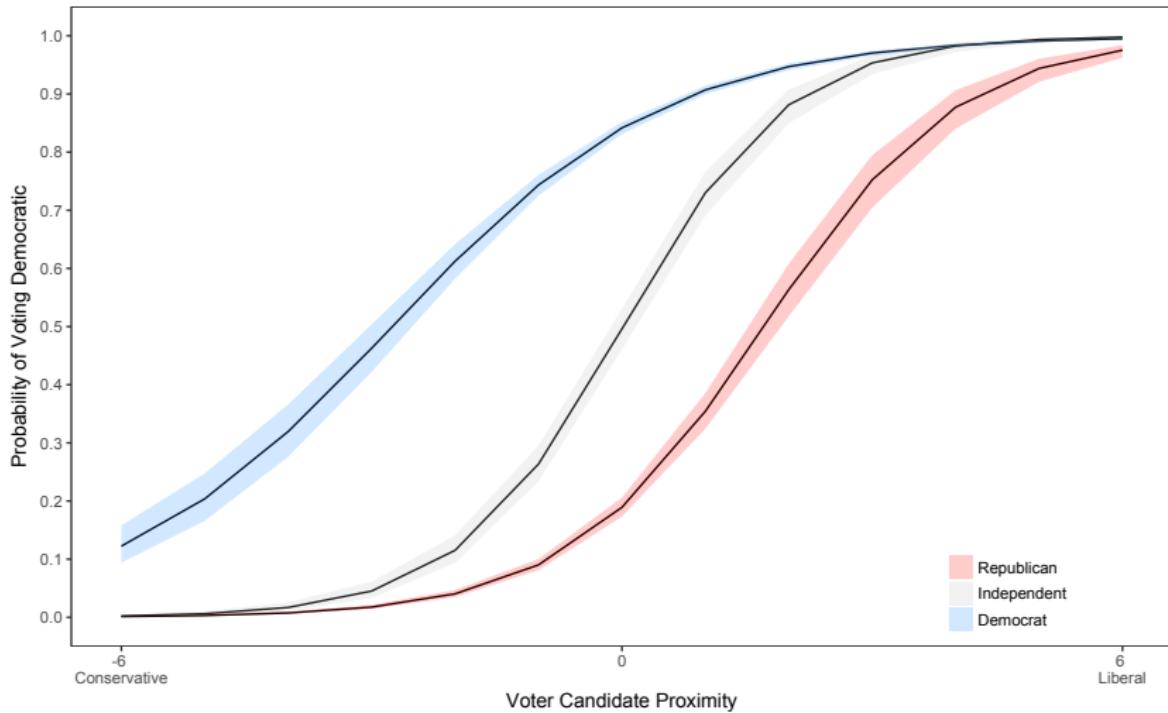
# Party ID & Proximity Voting in Presidential Elections

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



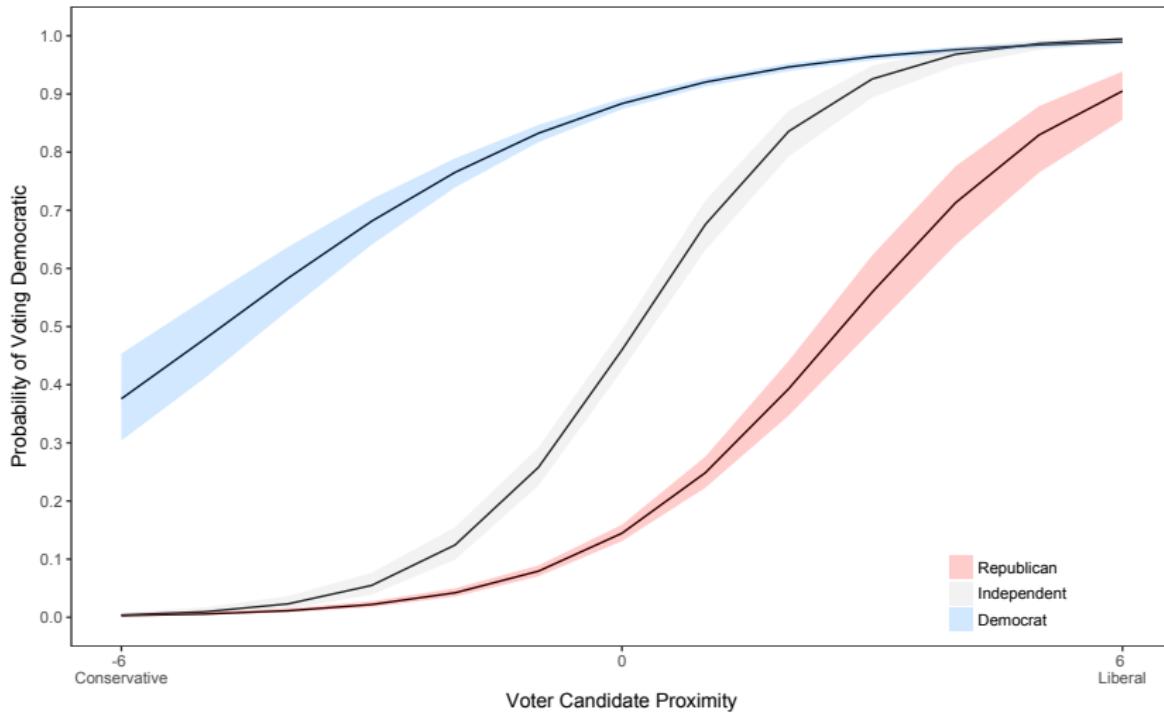
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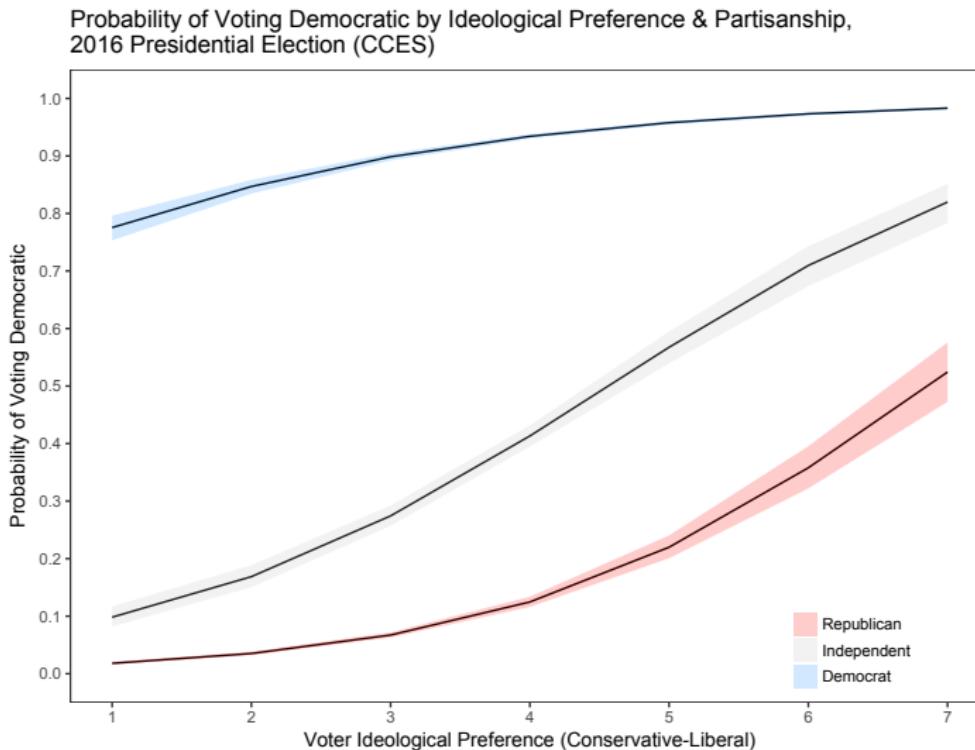


# Party ID & Proximity Voting in House Elections

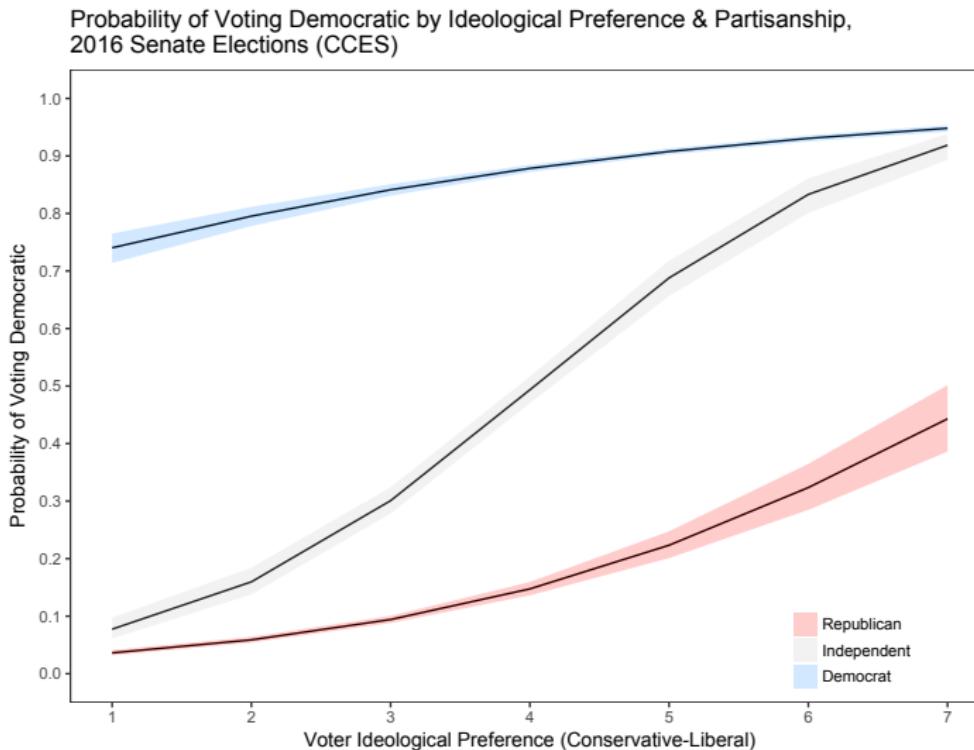
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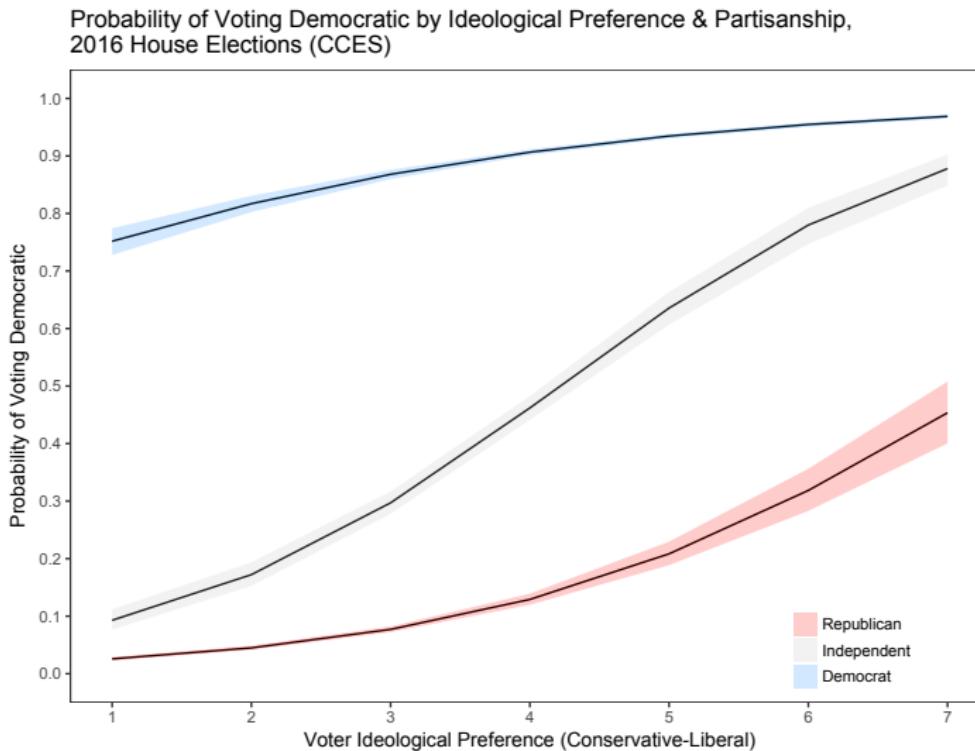
# Party ID & Ideological Voting in Presidential Elections



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# 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*

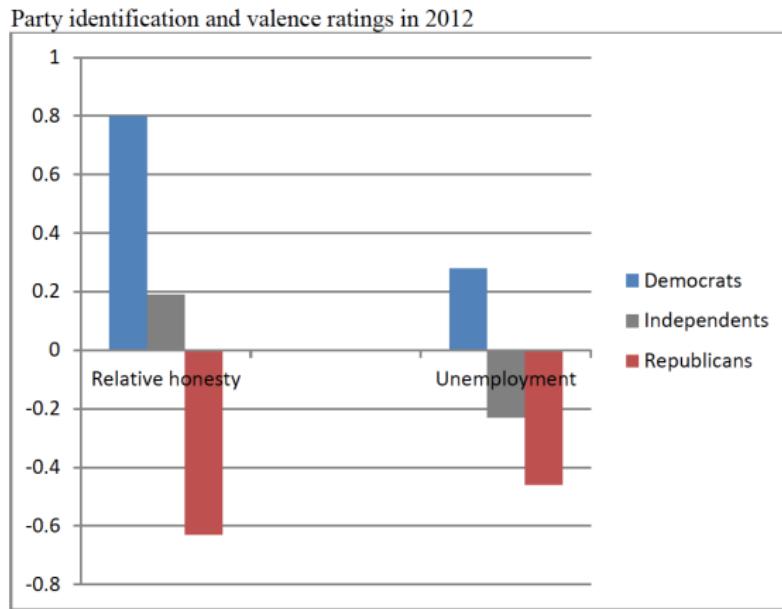
# Partisanship & “Correct” Proximity Voting

*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*

# Partisanship & Valence Perceptions

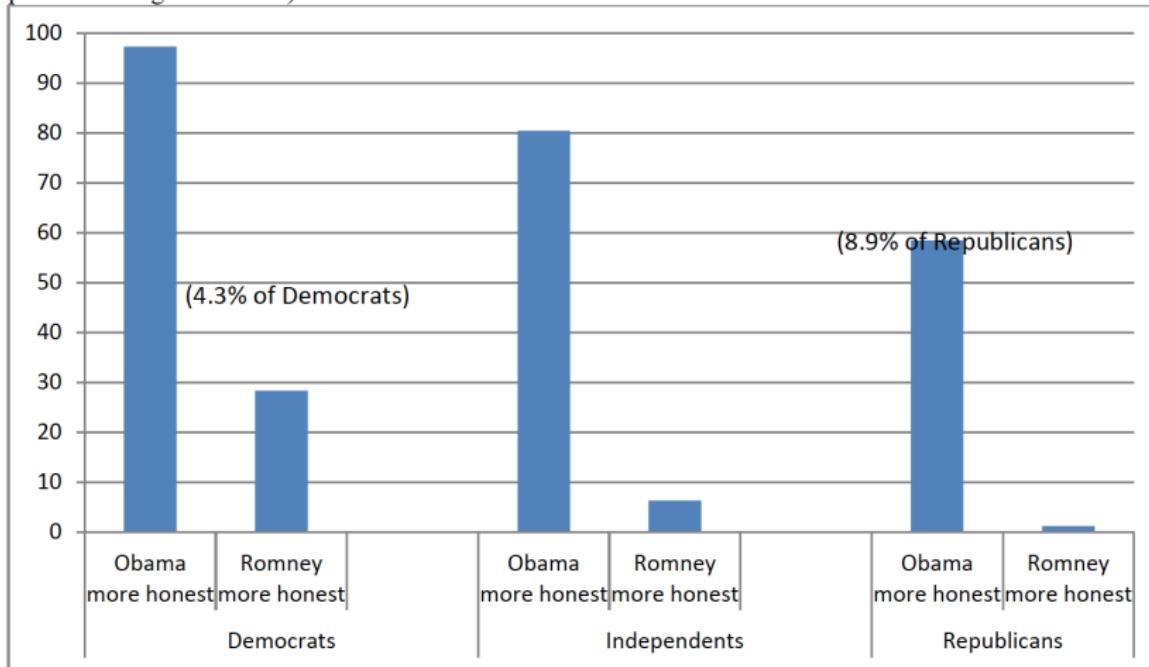


Note: Positive relative honesty scores indicate Obama rated more honest than Romney; negative scores indicate Romney rated more honest. Positive unemployment scores indicate respondents thought unemployment was going down; negative scores indicate respondents thought unemployment was going up.

Source: Stone (2015) UC Davis Pol 1 Seminar

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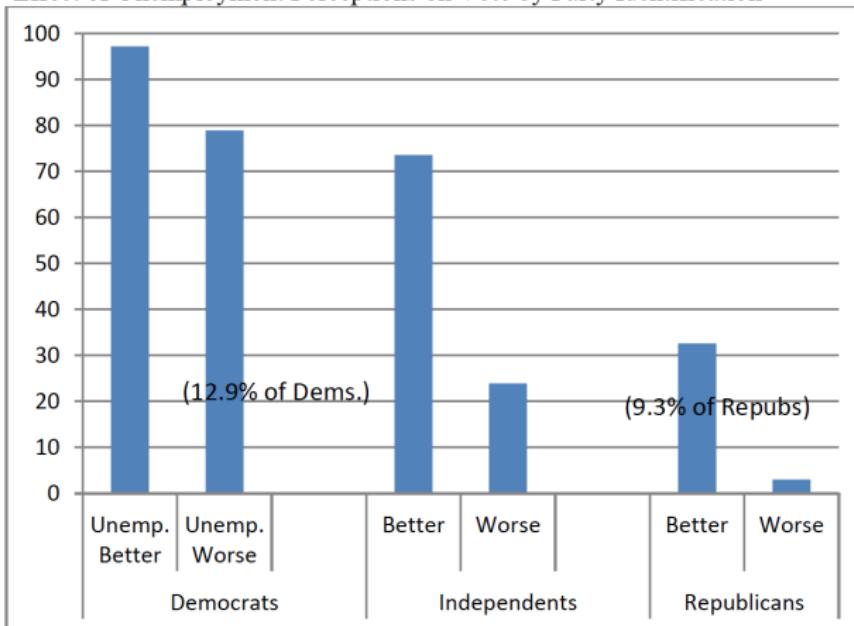
Relative candidate honesty ratings and voting for Obama by party identification (Bars indicate the percent voting for Obama)



Source: Stone (2015) UC Davis Pol 1 Seminar

# Partisanship & Valence Perceptions

Effect of Unemployment Perceptions on Vote by Party Identification



Source: Stone (2015) UC Davis Pol 1 Seminar

## 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
- ▶ Valence model limited by partisan biases of perceptions