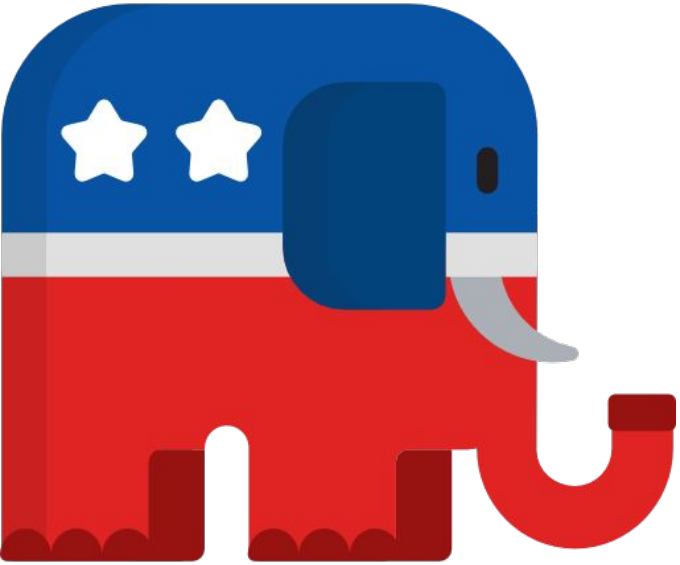
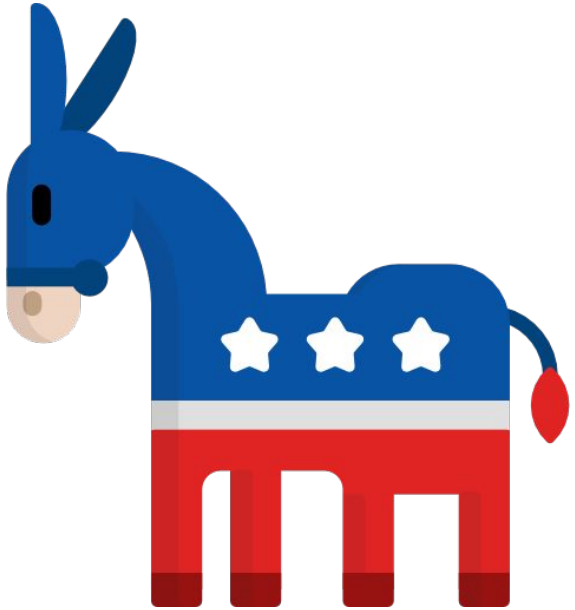
Faultlines Project



An analysis of how the two party system has changed in the past fifty years, and a look to the possible future.



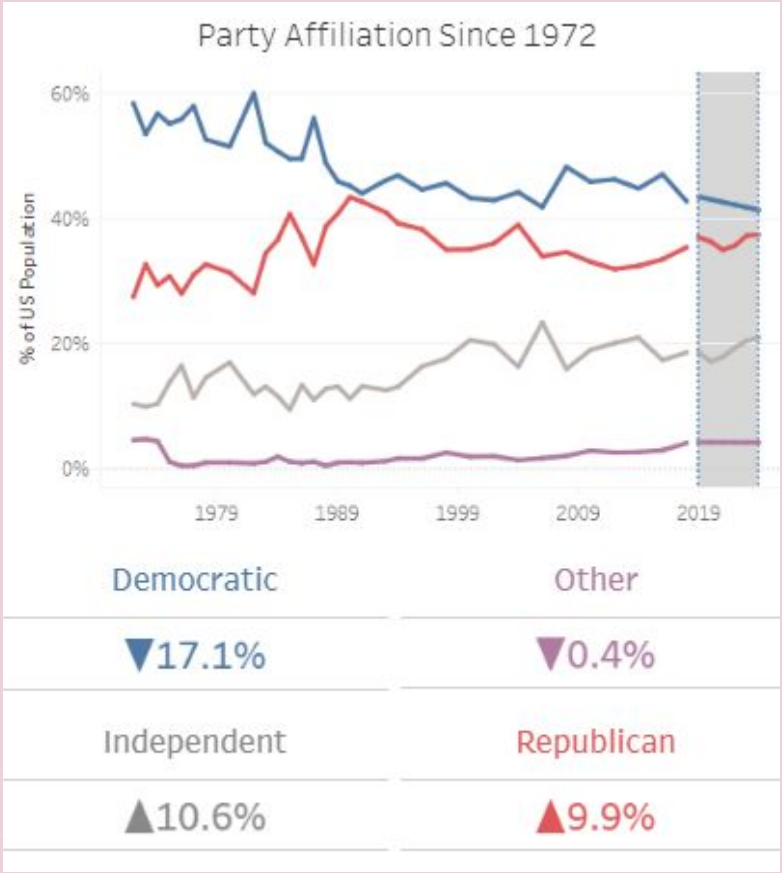
By Shawn Sobieski

Methodology and Data

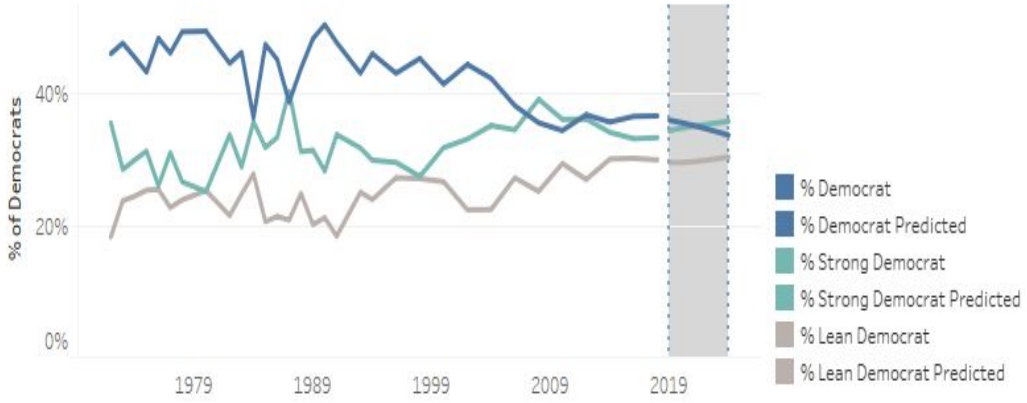
- Data collected from the General Social Survey conducted by the University of Chicago
- Spans 50 years of data and 34 survey questions
- Applied Time Series Analysis, specifically ARIMA modeling to forecast future shifts in the two party system

Where Do We Stand?

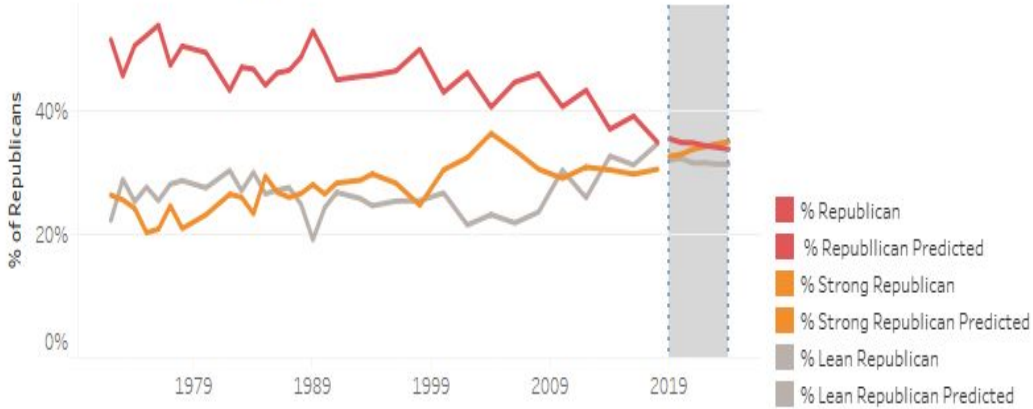
- Since 1972 independent affiliation is trending up
- This is affecting the two party system in several interesting ways



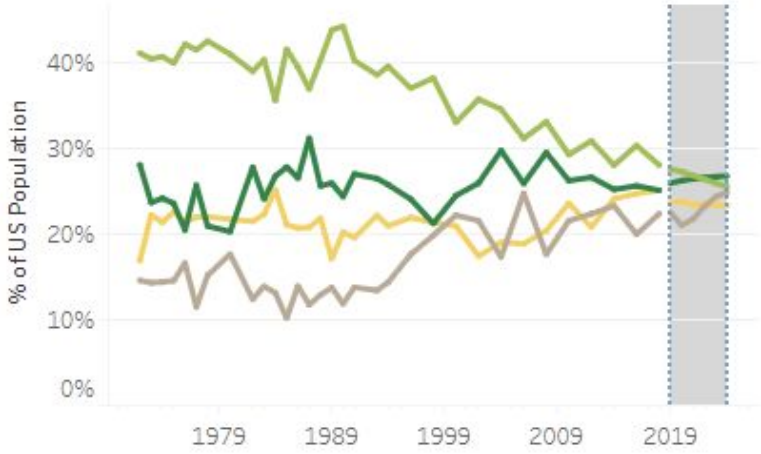
Level of Democratic Affiliation Since 1972



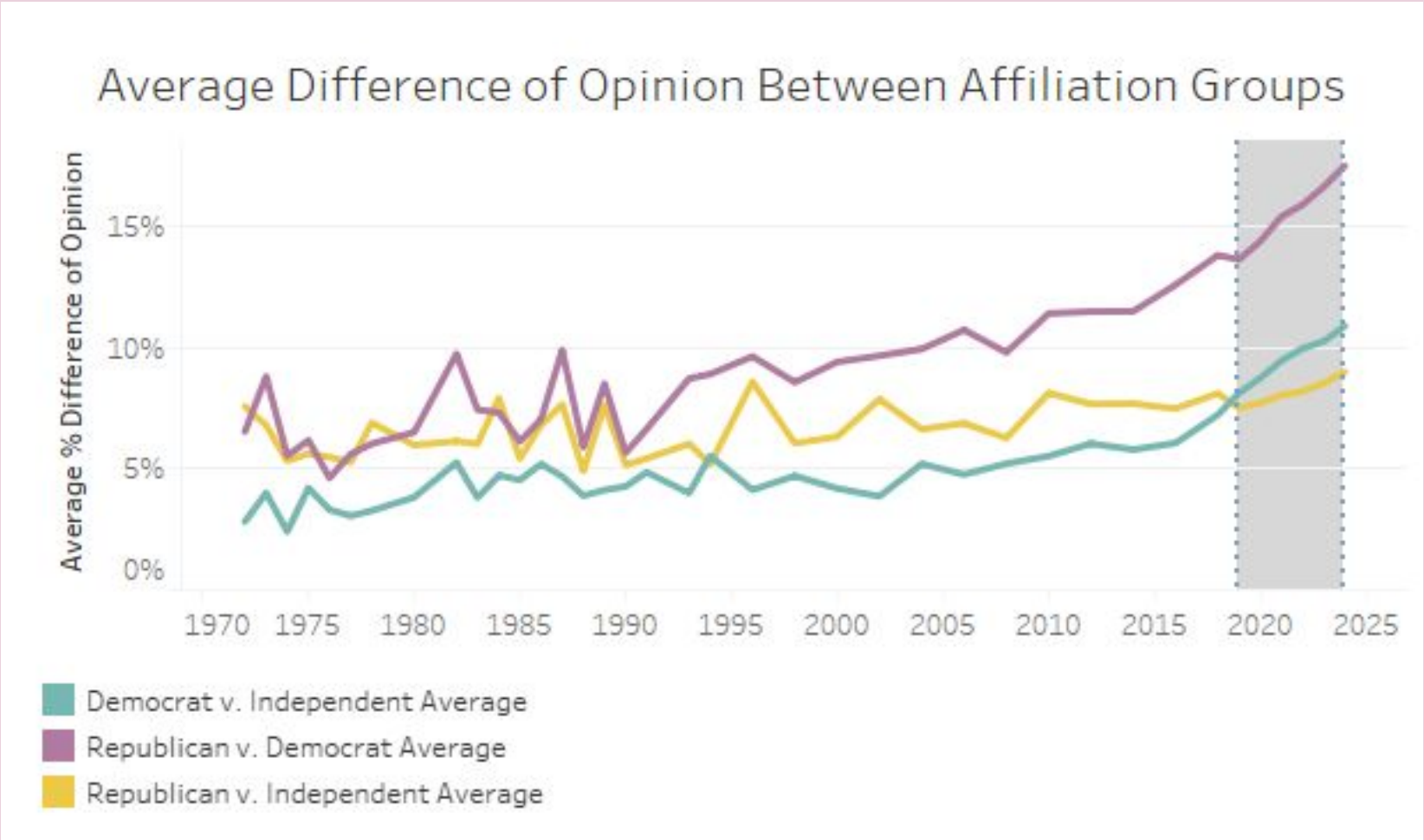
Level of Republican Affiliation since 1972



% of US Population by Level of Affiliation with a Party

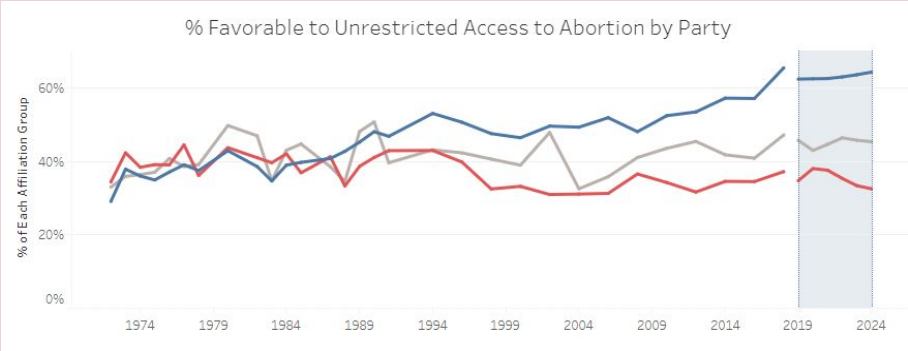


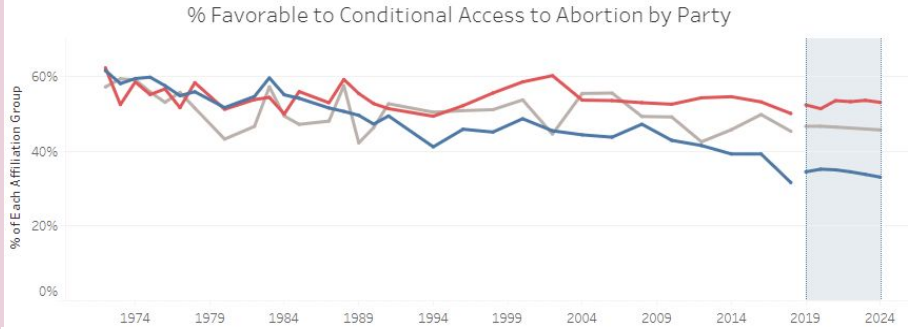
Strong	Leaning
▼1.3%	▲6.5%
Central	**Independent**
▼15.5%	▲10.3%

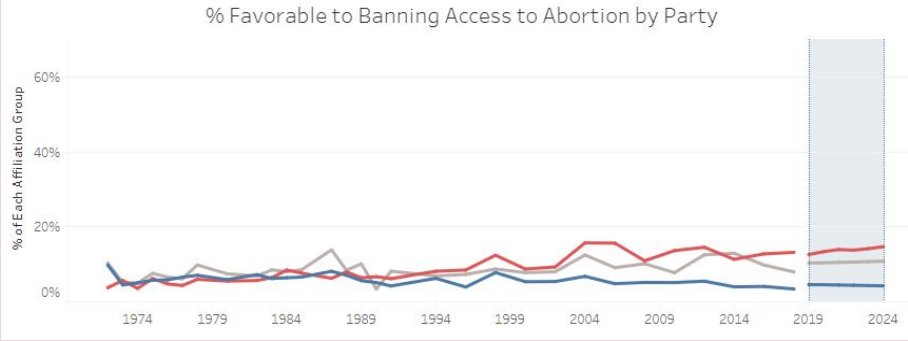

Average Difference of Opinion Between Affiliation Groups
Average % Difference of Opinion
15%
10%
5%
0%
1970
1975
1980
1985
1990
1995
2000
2005
2010
2015
2020
2025
Democrat v. Independent Average
Republican v. Democrat Average
Republican v. Independent Average

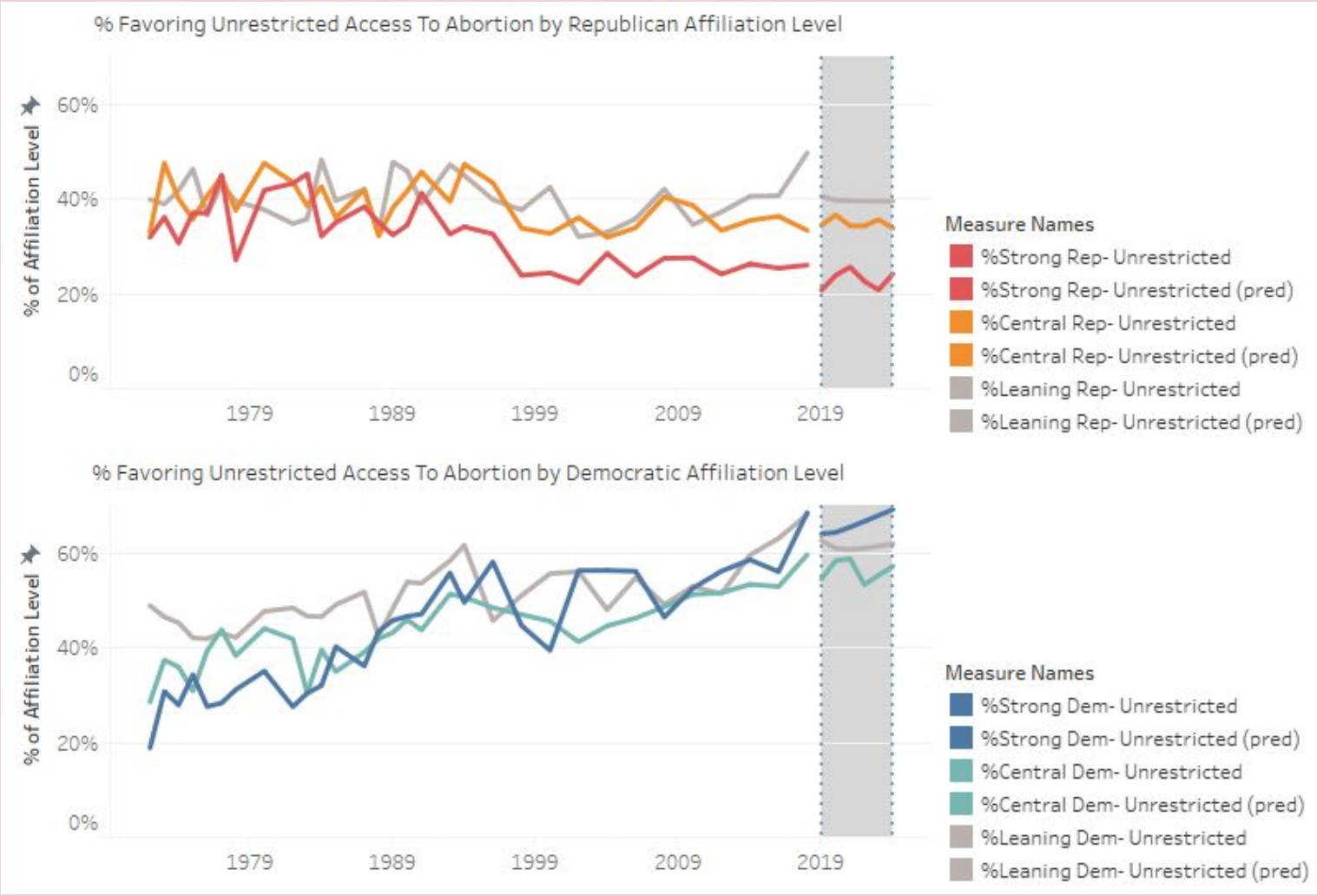
Shifting Values

- Abortion rights is only one of many examples of how party support is shifting as more people identify as politically independent



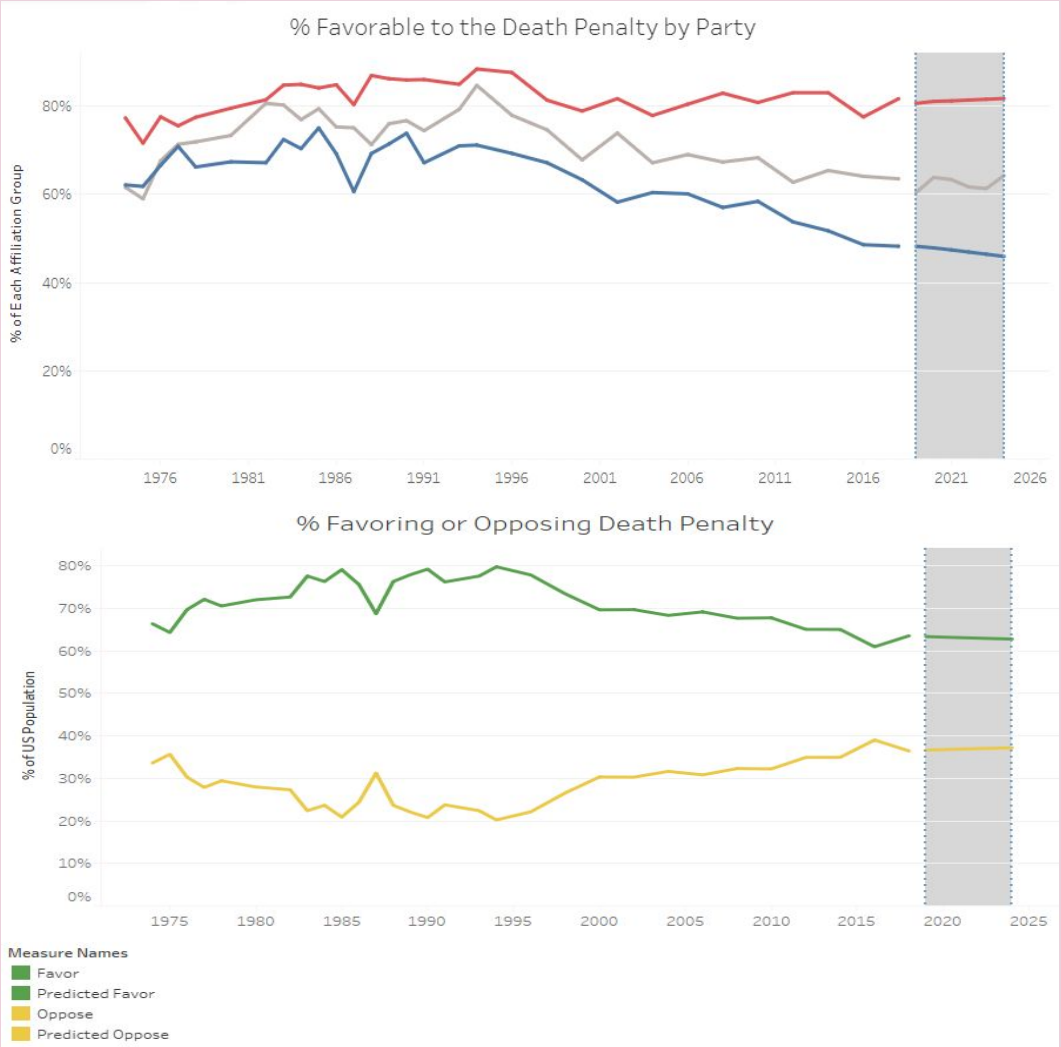





% Favoring Unrestricted Access To Abortion by Republican Affiliation Level
% of Affiliation Level
60%
40%
20%
0%
1979
1989
1999
2009
2019
Measure Names
%Strong Rep- Unrestricted
%Strong Rep- Unrestricted (pred)
%Central Rep- Unrestricted
%Central Rep- Unrestricted (pred)
%Leaning Rep- Unrestricted
%Leaning Rep- Unrestricted (pred)
% Favoring Unrestricted Access To Abortion by Democratic Affiliation Level
% of Affiliation Level
60%
40%
20%
0%
1979
1989
1999
2009
2019
Measure Names
%Strong Dem- Unrestricted
%Strong Dem- Unrestricted (pred)
%Central Dem- Unrestricted
%Central Dem- Unrestricted (pred)
%Leaning Dem- Unrestricted
%Leaning Dem- Unrestricted (pred)

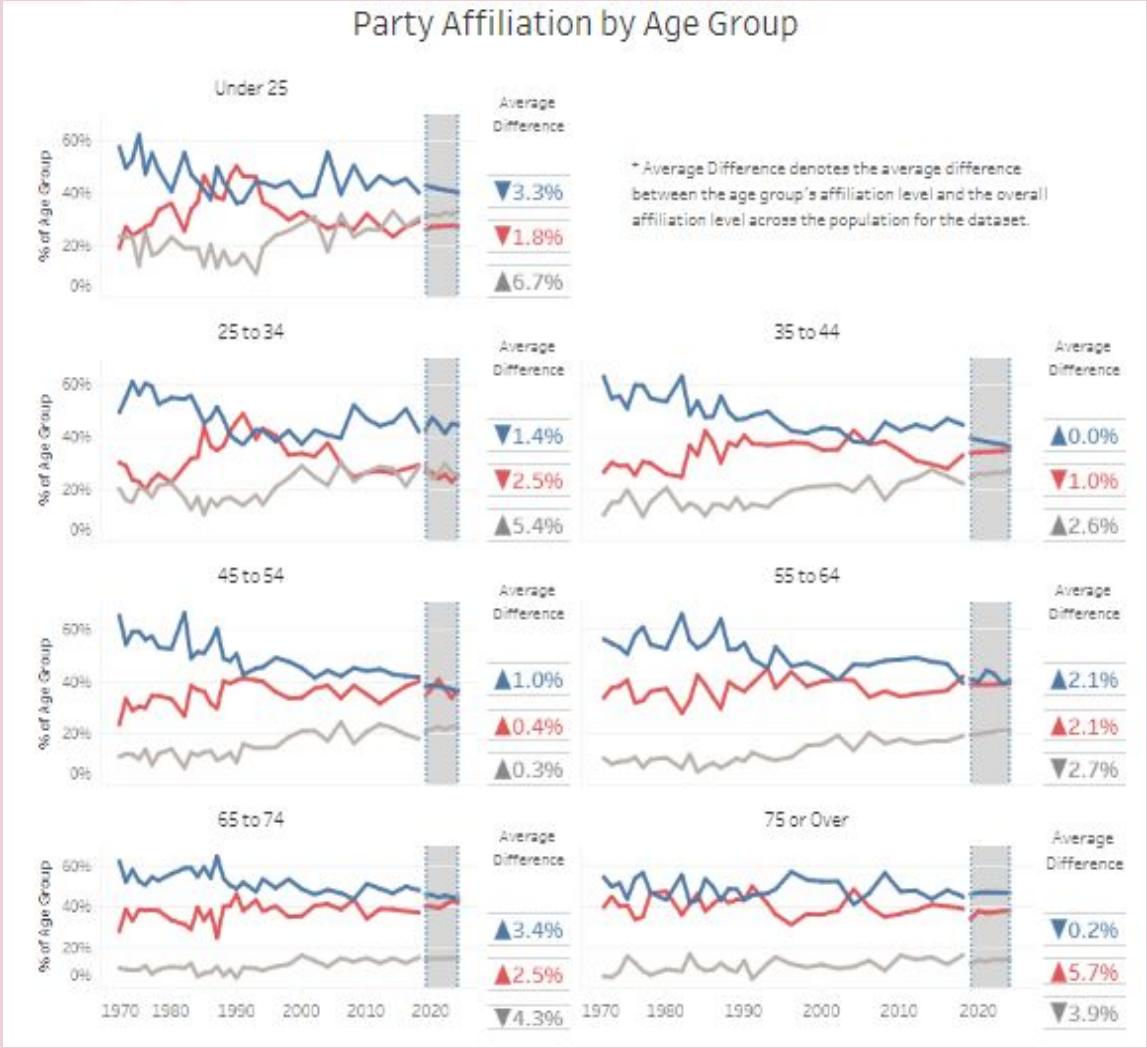
Partisan Divide

- Even as partisan politics consolidate around particular viewpoints, these consolidating positions do not necessarily reflect popular opinion overall



Demographics

- Breaking party affiliation down by age fills in some of the mystery of the observed shifts
- Young people are significantly less likely to affiliate with either party than other age groups



Conclusions

- Americans are rapidly distancing themselves from the traditional two-party system, and as a result the opinion gap between the two parties is expanding
- Increasingly, the most divisive and extreme opinions are defining the viewpoints that people use to navigate and discuss the two-party system
- Although these partisan divides are growing, they do not necessarily reflect popular opinion on an issue
- Young people in particular are sensitive to this issue, and are the most prone to identifying as independent

Future Work

- Predict future opinions in order to appeal to particular audiences and demographics
- Use Natural Language Processing to model political platforms and compare them to the observed opinion gaps from this survey

Thank you!

Any questions? Email me at shsobieski@gmail.com