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Partisanship as Identity: the Hype, the Myth, and the Reality of Polarization in the American Electorate

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Dedication

To those who persist in trying to ask the right questions.

PARTISANSHIP AS IDENTITY: THE HYPE, THE MYTH, AND THE REALITY OF POLARIZATION IN THE AMERICAN ELECTORATE

by

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There is a story of a young man who sought to study under a Zen Master. "How long will it take to become a Zen Master?" asked the young man. "Ten years," replied the Master. "How long will it take if I spend all of my time studying and practicing?" asked the young man. "Twenty years," said the Master. "But why so long?" asked the young man. The Master replied, "Because when all your attention is on the destination, you have none left for the journey."

A list of those who have made this journey possible would take far more space than allowed, but the bibliography is a representative sample. Particular thanks are due to Alan Abramowitz, Jim Campbell, Mo Fiorina, and John Zaller, gentlemen and scholars all, for their phenomenal work, thought-provoking insights, and for proving that polarized positions and incivility are separate and distinguishable conditions. And the greatest thanks are owed to the late Dr. David L. Hall, because questions are often more important than answers.

Abstract

This work examines the existence and extent of polarization in the American electorate as a contemporary phenomenon based in hyper-partisan or "tribal[1]" identity rather than as arising out of a more conventional ideological framework. This approach allows for the bypassing of more conventional questions such as the meaning of "liberal" or "conservative" or "in virtue of what is someone a liberal/conservative?", and instead allows acceptance of a respondent's ideological or partisan self-identification as a convenient label which does not require a monolithic set of political beliefs for its basis, although the prior or subsequent adoption of such a set of beliefs is not precluded. This framework's major advantage is its parsimonious explanation of the contemporary American political environment, especially at the macropolitical level. It includes a contribution to the literature through the development of ideological and partisan indicators based in attitudes rather than issue preferences and proposes improvements to the currently used methods of placing and determining ideological attitudes. It cannot resolve the differences between approaches such as behavioralism and institutionalism as the act of adopting an identity is an individual behavior *per se*, which occurs within an institutional setting that limits the set of policies which can be preferred and the set of identities which can be adopted or ascribed. It does, however, allow these disparate approaches to coexist. This framework is in many ways an *a priori* construct and should be viewed as a broad outline for future work rather than a complete theoretical model. It defines critical terms and concepts, examines arguments for and critiques of ideologically grounded explanations before outlining and demonstrating the partisan identity framework. It uses survey data from ANES and other sources to compare the explanatory power of the differing approaches, discusses the implications of those analyses, identifies unanswered questions, outlines the direction of future inquiry, and concludes.

[1] Throughout this work, the word "tribal" is used in its Latin (*tribus*) sense of division based in group identity. Any other meaning is neither intended nor implied.

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Chapter 1: Definitions and Conceptualization

At the 1992 Republican National Convention, Pat Buchanan declared, "There is a religious war going on in this country. It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we shall be as the Cold War itself, for this war is for the soul of America." (C-SPAN 1992, 27:58). This declaration, while undoubtedly intended to support his portrayal of the Republican Party as siding with the "good guys," was most probably an allusion to James Hunter's 1991 book, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*, in which Hunter proposed the polarization of American society over issues such as gun control, abortion, gay rights, and other sociocultural issues which had entered the national political discourse and become highly salient and divisive during the previous decades. Political scientists were not slow to note that the tenor of that national discourse had been deteriorating for some time, so began investigating both the division and its extent and qualities. This paper continues and extends that line of inquiry by proposing that these divisions and their effects are due to identity-based attitudes and affiliations rather than ideological ones. This chapter will examine some of the critical terms and concepts necessary for the following chapters. Most importantly, it will define what polarization is, conduct a limited examination of what it is not, and examine the how polarization might occur within the framework of the traditional median voter theorem.

Perhaps the most prolific of the polarization researchers, Alan Abramowitz and Morris Fiorina, have engaged in voluminous debate which has run over the course of about 13 years, although they have less directly engaged for about 20 years. Abramowitz has essentially maintained that the American electorate not only was and is polarized but that the extent and quality of that polarization is increasing (Abramowitz 2006, 2010a, 2010b, 2013, 2018; Abramowitz and Fiorina 2013; Abramowitz and Saunders 1998, 2005, 2006, 2008). Fiorina has

maintained that the American electorate was and remains mostly centrist in its views and that any perception of polarization is primarily attributable to the small but noisy extremes of the ideological spectrum and the increasing ideological homogeneity (sorting) of the two major parties (Abramowitz and Fiorina 2013; Fiorina 1999 and 2017; Fiorina and Abrams 2006 and 2010; Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2005 (2011) and 2008; Fiorina and Levendusky 2006). Both sides have collected their fair share of adherents, and many of the underlying questions remain unsettled. Abraham Lincoln's *Meditation on the Divine Will* might seem particularly appropriate to this situation ("both may be and one must be wrong"), but there are alternative interpretations which allow for both sides to be correct and accurate in their versions of what the data say, although not necessarily in their interpretations of what those data *mean*. Political philosopher Lawrence Cahoone (2014) proposed what he termed the "political continuum hypothesis" to explain the proliferation of political positions: given any linear spectrum of political positions and any two points on that spectrum, a third point will be invented which occupies a position between the first two. This can be and is commonly accomplished by shifting the meaning of and/or emphasis on important terms but can also be done by crafting a compromise position which contains a bit from each, or by other means. I do not believe a compromise position can be crafted without resorting to semantic devices as the two arguments are firmly grounded in differing conceptions of "the electorate," among other things, but the nature and implications of polarization can be bridged by demonstrating that the basis of its more malignant effects is not in ideological or issue divergence, but elsewhere. This allows both sides' data and findings to coexist as differing components of a larger framework.

DiMaggio, Evans, and Bryson (1996) proposed the generally accepted position that polarization in its political sense has two meanings: it can be taken to refer to a state or condition

in one sense, while it can refer to a process in the other. Both usages are correct. As a descriptor of a state or condition, one must be clear that polarization is not a switch that is either on or off, but a classification of the degree of divergence between two positions or a qualitative description of how that divergence manifests among people who hold those positions. As a measure of positional divergence, thinking of that measure as a speedometer may be an apt analogy. One can look at a sufficiently precise speedometer and claim that some object is moving at a rate of *x* mph/kph and expect that another person looking at the same speedometer would agree on the reading. One cannot look at that same speedometer and claim that the object is moving "fast" or "slow" and confidently expect agreement as the terms require an agreed upon standard to which the speed may be compared. In this respect, "polarized" is a very imprecise term. One may, subject to objections over measurement and error, claim that x-percent of voters support something while y-percent oppose it. However, an assertion of that x-amount of divergence equals polarization is minimally open to objections of arbitrariness. In many respects, the use of polarization as a descriptor of the level of political disagreement can be seen as similar to the use of "landslide" as a descriptor of election outcomes; most would agree that a 20-percent or more margin of victory probably warrants the use of the term, while a single-digit margin of victory probably does not, but what about margins between 10 and 19 percent? In this same vein, while divergence, ideology/partisanship, issue positions, and other indicators can be measured, what level of divergence across how many issues or issue domains between how much of which segments of the population equates to being "polarized?" Thus, if the respective "polarized" and "not polarized" conclusions of Abramowitz and Fiorina can be reconciled, one must first closely examine what they mean by their use of specific terms.

1.1 POLARIZATION DEFINED

It would be a supreme overstatement to claim that a definitional gap in the polarization literature exists, as it is more of a pothole than a chasm, but the vast majority of the polarization authors fail to define polarization, choosing instead to focus on questions such as "is it polarized?", "to what extent is it polarized?", "who is polarized?", or "why are they polarized?" while ignoring the more central question of "what is polarization?" Even Fiorina and Abramowitz did not explicitly define the term and only a couple of researchers have directly addressed this question. DiMaggio, Evans, and Bryson (1996, p. 693 and hereafter the DiMaggio group) defined polarization as "the extent to which opinions on an issue are opposed in relation to some theoretical maximum."[2] Fiorina's and Abramowitz' works generally adhere to this definition. Campbell's (2018, 1) definition of "highly polarized" is "substantial differences in political perspectives across a single dimension." Removing the modifiers "highly" and "substantial" from each side yields "differences in political perspectives," leaving the amount of difference and dimensionality as measurement parameters. At a later point Campbell (2018, 16) adds "intense conflict" to his definition, which compromises the initial definition such that under the modified definition, polarization may not exist without a measure of both divergence and conflict, a two-dimensional construct. However, Campbell's second definition captures the more salient meaning as intense conflict cannot exist without divergence, but divergence can exist without intense conflict. Returning to Campbell's initial definition, one can safely start from the idea that polarization, taken broadly and in its political sense, is the degree to which opinions on political issues diverge, perhaps with or without the limiting qualification of those issues where there can be, and perhaps should be, a reasonable divergence in the larger discourse.

[2] The DiMaggio group's examination of polarization actually focused on the degree of deviation from centrality, but this does not detract from the definition.

Mundane questions, such as "should we paint the kitchen?" logically have only two possible answers, "yes" and "no," as do more momentous ones, such as "should we declare war?"[3] However, to call painting the kitchen a polarizing question perhaps says more about the condition of the relationships within the household than it does about the condition of the kitchen, and this analogy may be extensible to the political arena. For example, a recent legislative argument over whether Pennsylvania's official state amphibian should be the Eastern Hellbender (the "snot otter") or Wehrle's Salamander (Calvert 2017) likely says more about the personalities in Pennsylvania's legislative leadership[4] than what Pennsylvania's state amphibian should be, whether the people of Pennsylvania have a preference on the issue, or even if Pennsylvanians believe they should have a state amphibian at all.

If polarization is the divergence of opinions on political issues and the degree of divergence is the measure of the severity of the condition, then a central question becomes one of what polarization looks like. In graphic form (see Figure 1.1 below), most observers would accept this as a nonpolarized distribution. All opposing points are equidistant from the mean (which is also the median) and the tails are equally distributed; it is a classic Gaussian or "normal" distribution. If imagined as a distribution of responses on something like a Likert-type preference scale, the average response is neutral relative to the object of the question with less than 5% of respondents holding extreme positions on it (e.g. strongly favoring or opposing).

[3] "Just war" is the generally accepted tradition in the United States, so "should we declare war?" might be more properly restated as "is going to war justified?" However, some recent injections of "holy war" justifications may be capable making the degree of justification a relevant question.

[4] This does not give the appearance of being a partisan or even a pragmatic issue. In 2017, Pennsylvania's state Senate was composed of 50 Senators (16 Democrats and 34 Republicans) who overwhelmingly (47-2) supported the bill designating the Eastern Hellbender as the state amphibian. The House majority leader, Dave Reed, who represents the area in which Wehrle's Salamander was discovered, put the brakes on the question and it had not been brought to a vote in the lower chamber at the time of this writing, over a year later.

Figure 1.1: Normal Distribution

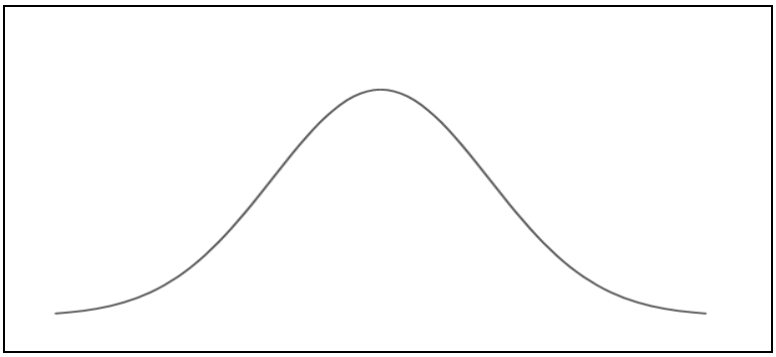


Figure 1.2: Bimodal Distribution

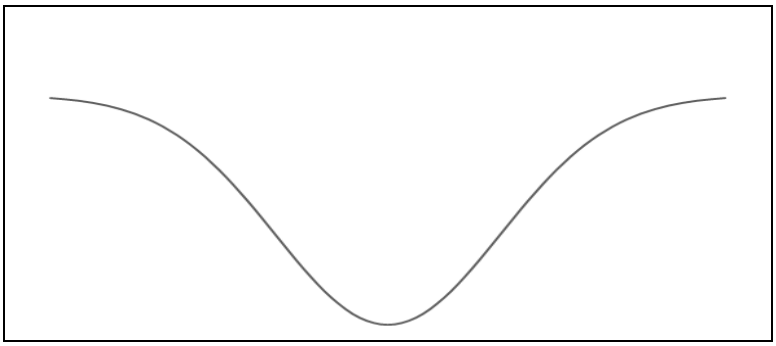


Figure 1.2 (above), by contrast, also shows all opposing points as equidistant from the mean (which is also the median), and the tails are still equally distributed, but this would be seen by most observers as a polarized distribution, or something close to it. Viewed as a scaled response set, most respondents hold very strong and opposing opinions while very few occupy the neutral ground. In both cases no proposition has the support of a majority of respondents, but in the first case, a reasonable interpretation might be that a compromise position is either held or desired by the majority, while in the second case a compromise position acceptable to the majority may be unobtainable. Keeping in mind that DiMaggio, et al. (1996) require the absence of a compromise position while Cahoone (2014) proposes its inevitable emergence, an additional caution regarding these interpretations is in order. If reduced to a sharper yes/no question, and assuming those in the absolute neutral position are equally likely to come down on either side of

the question, the result would be an inconclusive 50:50 split. This example illustrates Fiorina's (2011) remarks about much information being lost when a spectrum of opinion is reduced to a dichotomous choice.

The late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan reportedly quipped that "you are entitled to your own opinion, but you are not entitled to your own facts" (Penny 2003). This idea leads to a further amendment of the starting definition such that at its most basic, polarization is the degree of divergence or separation of opinion or position on a given *normative* question. This change produces some of its own problems as most political questions do not reduce to positive considerations of, for example, what the tax rate is, but rather normative ones of what it should be. But "should be" becomes possible only after reaching a conclusion that "is" is inadequate. Returning to the mundane example of painting the kitchen, the question of "should we paint?" logically has only two possible answers, but it is founded on deeper considerations:

- The question of the current condition of the kitchen is positive; it can be objectively measured.
- The question of whether its current condition has reached a point of unacceptability requiring action on the part of the homeowners is normative. While the factors that lead to the determination of acceptableness can be identified, counted, and controlled for, there is too much subjectivity in the importance of those measures. This is one of the areas where polarized perspectives could manifest.
- The questions of resource availability and associated opportunity costs are positive.

- The question of whether the expected utility of inaction is outweighed by the expected utility of action is not fully one or the other. Expected utility would normally be classified as a positive issue as it can, with a healthy dose of *ceteris paribus*, be empirically measured. But the underlying utility is a normative consideration as it will vary by actor and is thus utility is neither completely positive nor normative. This, too, is an area where polarized perspectives could show effects.

With a working definition of polarization as being the amount of divergence between opinions on normative questions, it becomes necessary to distinguish the behaviors that are commonly identified as being polarized.

1.2 PARTISANSHIP AND IDEOLOGICAL POLARIZATION

As used in current political discussion, polarization describes a condition of either the whole or various subsets of the general electorate which has persisted since the late 1960s or early 1970s, where political elites and some segments of the larger population engage in loud and often heated disagreement over a broad range of issues. However, when this usage appears in the literature, the term strongly implies *partisan* polarization[5] and generally centers around the conflicts between the two major political parties rather than the more benign give-and-take of constructive political discourse. While a full historical examination of its sources is outside the scope of the present work, these larger divisions have been variously attributed to racial issues arising after the 1958 midterm elections (Carmines and Stimson 1989), the conflicts over civil rights and Vietnam of the mid- and late 1960s (Campbell 2018), Reagan-era congressional reforms (Rhode 1991), or the 1994 mid-term elections (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998 and

[5] Abramowitz initially structured his side of the argument in terms of ideological polarization, but his later works (Abramowitz 2018 in particular) have shifted more toward partisanship as the basis of polarization.

Mann and Ornstein 2013), among others. The use of the 1994 midterms explanation is elite-driven; Mann and Ornstein emphasize the Republican House campaigns, led by Newt Gingrich and others, and their delegitimization of the Congress as the main explanatory factor. Echoes of this can be found more than 20 years later in the 2016 Trump campaign's "drain the swamp" rhetoric, although the Democrats have utilized similar rhetoric ("culture of corruption"), indicating that neither party has particularly clean hands in this regard. It should also be noted that "running against Washington" has a long history in American federal election campaigns, so Mann and Ornstein's assertion goes mostly to intensity rather than existence.

Poole and Rosenthal (1983) developed the D-NOMINATE dataset as a response to a gap noted by McCrae (1958) between the ability to order positions within the spatial model and the need to be able to reliably calculate the distance between those positions. They have continued to refine this system in the years since, resulting in the current DW-NOMINATE, which allows for a variety of spatial comparisons between members of Congress who did not serve at the same time. While it has the capability of placing legislators within a multi-dimensional space, most legislative outcomes can be explained in terms of the first (liberal-conservative) dimension, especially since the realignment of the South. Legislators' scores range from -1 (most liberal) to 1 (most conservative), so a few measures present themselves as useful points of comparison. The variation of the distance between the mean party positions is used as evidence of both the existence and degree of congressional polarization. The few Independents in Congress would be appropriate to include for calculation of chamber mean and median positions but have been excluded for purposes of making party comparisons. I use a somewhat arbitrary starting point of the 86th Congress in order to establish the 1960s as a baseline for comparison and stop at the 113th Congress (2013-2015) as this Congress resulted from the 2012 election cycle, which was

the last round of ANES data used by most of the authors upon whom I am relying.[6] I am not controlling for South, which deserves its own examination somewhere else, but will note that following the collapse of the old New Deal Coalition in the late 1960s, the upward (conservative) pull on the Democrat mean position began to weaken and by the end of the 1980s, there is little utility in controlling for South as the lines for southern and non-southern Democrats mostly parallel the Democrat line, perhaps effectively delineating the upper and lower bounds of the party, but more likely serving only to illustrate that southern Democrats remain more conservative than their non-southern counterparts.

Figure 1.3 (below) shows the difference between the mean positions of the two parties in the House of Representatives. The difference has been growing steadily from about 1980 through 2015, but variance in the mean position of the Democratic Party (average term-to-term variation of 0.005) is significantly less than the variation of its Republican counterpart (average term-to-term variation of 0.018), calling into question the assertion that congressional polarization is largely caused by both parties moving toward more extreme positions. Over the period being examined, Democratic representatives moved a cumulative 0.134 closer to the liberal end of the spectrum, while Republican representatives moved 0.494 closer to the conservative end. The realignment of southern congressional districts can account for some the downward pressure on the Democratic line but cannot alone account for the more extreme upward movement of the Republican line. Thus, the Democratic Party in the House has become slightly more liberal while the House Republican Party has become significantly more conservative. Figure 1.4 (below) graphs the change in the difference between the mean positions of both parties in the House over the same time period.

[6] The 2016 election data was added to the CDF in mid-2018 but was unavailable as its own dataset until mid-2017.

Figure 1.3: Mean House Party Position, 86th-113th Congress

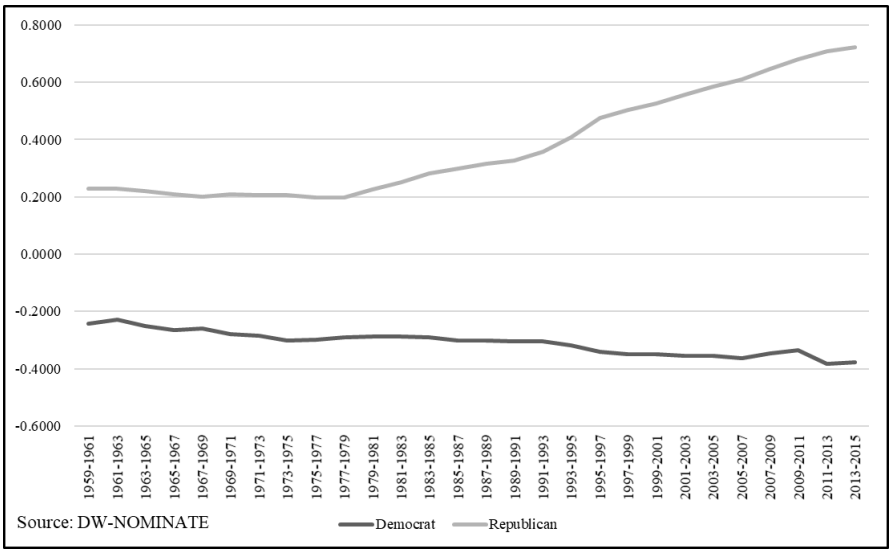
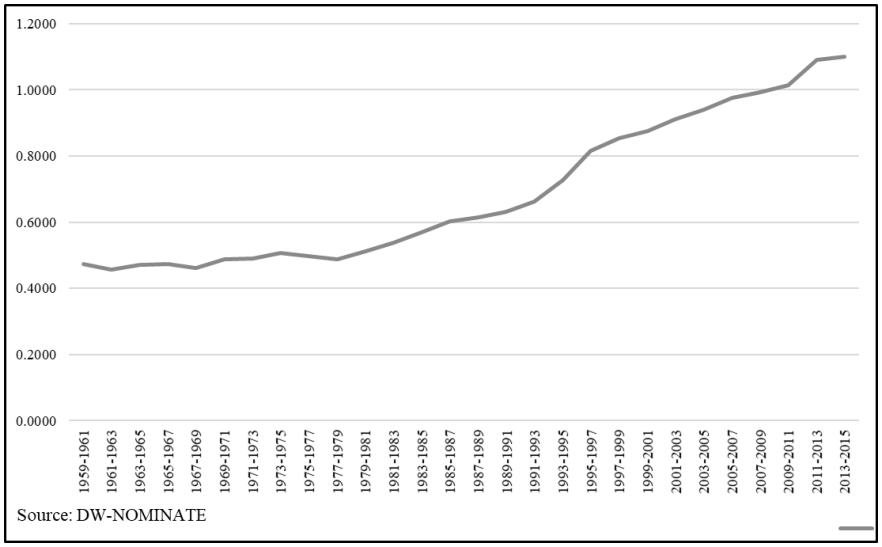


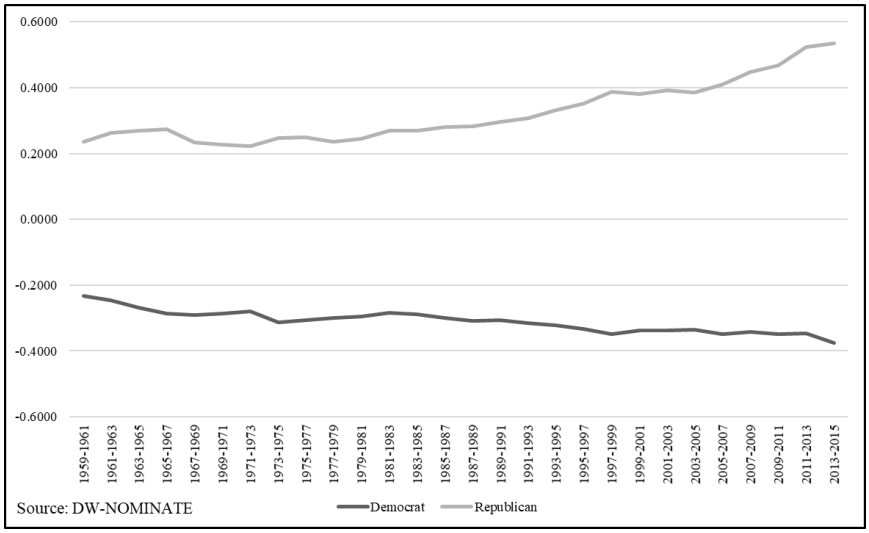
Figure 1.4: Difference in Mean House Party Position, 86th-113th Congress



Figures 1.5 and 1.6 (below) show the same information for the Senate. Again, there is some downward pressure on the Democrat line, due at least in part to the realignment of the South, but there is greater upward movement on the Republican line than can be accounted for by that realignment. As was the case in the House, Democratic senators became slightly more liberal over time, moving 0.144 closer to the liberal pole (average session-to-session variation is

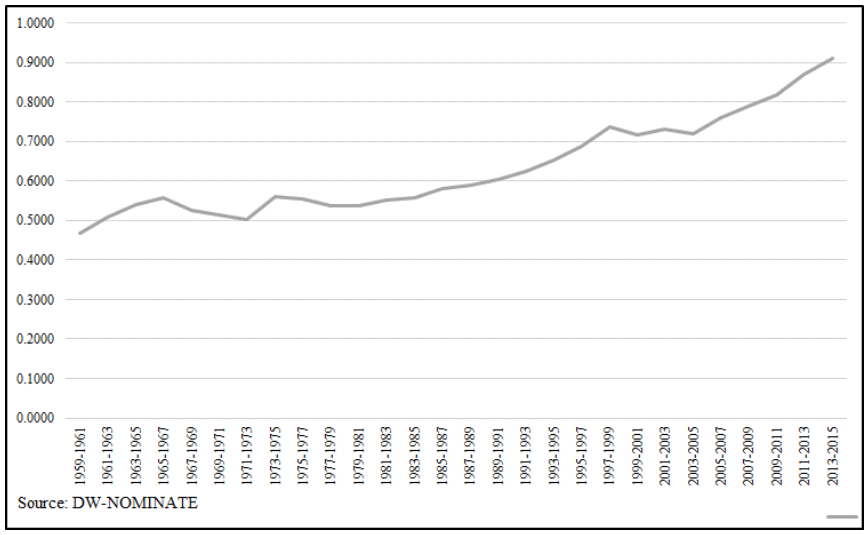
0.005), while Republican senators became significantly more conservative, moving 0.299 closer to the conservative pole (average session-to-session variation is 0.012). The Senate results call into question the commonly advanced argument that district gerrymandering is a major cause of congressional polarization since Senate boundaries are not subject to redistricting and divergence is noticeably active in both chambers. While this is a much simpler approach to the gerrymandering question than that taken by McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal (2008)[7], the conclusions are effectively the same. The longer time horizons and differing legislative style of the Senate may account for some of the smaller variations in the mean Senate positions in comparison to the House positions but Theriault and Rohde (2011) find most of the causality among Republican senators who served in the House after 1978, rather than the other explanations.

Figure 1.5: Mean Senate Party Position, 86th-113th Congress



[7] McCarty, et al., compared House delegations from single-district states to those from states subject to reapportionment, concluding that district gerrymandering could account for no more than about 10%-15% of the variation in the House divergence, but if examined at the individual district level, the difference in variation was indistinguishable from zero.

Figure 1.6: Difference in Mean Senate Party Position, 86th-113th Congress



In contrast to these other explanations, Hetherington (2009) and Layman, et al. (2006) argue that partisan polarization has been the norm for most of the country's history, with the more consociational and bipartisan character of the three or four post-WWII decades being anomalous. While the existence and timing of partisan polarization in the past has been and likely will continue to be the subject of academic debate, the present-day effect has been the emergence of two parties with clearly different and opposing policy agendas, a growing incivility and occasional outright partisan antagonism in political discourse, which give every indication of having become the new normal in contemporary American politics.

In many respects, the current treatment of partisanship and partisan polarization bears strong resemblance to the Federalists' treatment of "faction." Writing in *Federalist No. 10* as a follow-up to the critique of Montesquieu's concerns about the effects of faction raised by Hamilton in *Federalist No. 9*, Madison defined faction as "a number of citizens, whether amounting to a minority or majority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and

aggregate interests of the community." Madison felt that minority factions had the capacity to be disruptive to the smooth functioning of government, noting that while they "may clog the administration [and] may convulse the society," they would be otherwise unable to implement their goals as they were a minority operating within a majoritarian system. The greater fear for Madison was the potential harm of a majority faction, which would have the power to put its policy goals into effect simply because it constituted a majority and could thus trample on the rights and interests of the minority.[8] To put the Federalists into their proper context, their fear of majority faction centered mainly upon the ability of the unpropertied majority to impose confiscatory or redistributive policies upon the propertied minority, a theme which still resonates more than two centuries later (e.g., Boix 2003, among others), but Madison's description of the effects of faction in the late 18th century bears striking similarity to the modern day. For this reason, *animosity* and *antipathy* will be used to describe the antagonism and incivility between the two major parties and their supporters, *partisanship* will be used to describe ideological or issue-based divergences arising out of the rhetoric of the parties and political elites, and *polarization* will be restricted to issue divergence generally.

1.3 POLARIZATION IS BENEFICIAL

I start from the proposition that all policies are intended as solutions to existing or potential problems. In and of itself, issue polarization can be beneficial and is necessary in any political system as difference of opinion leads to the generation and presentation of a set of policy choices for decision-makers. This is not to assert that it will produce the set of all solutions, but it should produce something approximating the set of solutions which are possible

[8] Madison's view of faction was in some respects a rejection of Rousseau's treatment of it in *The Social Contract*. Rousseau's construction of the "General Will" necessarily leads to the conclusion what whatever the majority decides is right is right. Madison's approach is more pragmatic and recognizes that being acceptable to the majority is different from being right.

within the institutional context of the relevant actors.[9] It is perhaps this potential to expand the set of ideas and solutions that underlies the current appreciation of diversity within some organizations and institutions. In keeping with this line of reasoning, Teles (2011, 179) argues that politicians are mostly demanders, not suppliers of ideas. Assuming this to be the case and merging it with the idea of the constraining effects of the institutional framework described above[10] produces the idea that, barring a radical change in the institutional governing coalition, the set of ideas and potential solutions produced within an institutional framework could be charitably characterized as "more of the same." This comports with Harari's (2018, 226) assertion that centers of power are built on existing knowledge and tend to exclude or ignore information which might tend to disturb or conflict with it. Under these constraints, a new center could potentially form away from the status quo, but only incrementally deviating from it in a direction that is acceptable to the existing leadership. In the case of a radical change in leadership, the set ideas could conceivably be less of the same and deviate farther from the status quo but should ultimately not be too radical a deviation because the knowledge base of those upon whom the leadership relies to implement its decisions is also constrained toward the status quo.[11] It is during the formulation stage of the policy-making process that issue divergence can be most beneficial, but it can be most harmful during the legitimation stage.[12] But one must always keep in mind that the spectrum of choices inexorably reduces to "yea" or "nay" by the

[9] If an idea which is applicable to a given situation exists, but that idea is not known to the actors or is otherwise not seen as existing within the realm of the possible, then it will effectively not exist as a potential solution because it will not be presented to or taken seriously by the decision-makers.

[10] This merger additionally incorporates Skocpol's (1995, p. 105) understanding of institutions as being "actual patterns of communication and activity" instead of the more traditional "values, norms, ideas, or official rules." While one might logically show Skocpol's understanding to be a subset of the traditional one, it requires a nuanced view of what "values, norms, ideas, or official rules" are, so the two have historically been distinguished.

[11] This observation should hold regardless of whether the system is authoritarian or democratic; majoritarian or pluralistic; uni-, bi-, or multipartisan; or any other dimension one might wish to use to distinguish.

[12] For a more complete description of the stages of the process, see Brewer and deLeon (1983) and Jones (1984).

time of the actual decision (Schattschneider 1942), which represents the fewest possible choices at the greatest possible divergence.

1.4 POLARIZATION ARISES FROM KNOWLEDGE (NORMALLY)

Regarding the base or pool of knowledge available to decision-makers, Harari (2018) tries to advance a view which tends more strongly to the philosophical than the political, but also highlights a potential source of the "what is known" problem. Drawing heavily on Sloman and Fernbach (2017), who are not without their own critics[13], Harari proposes that knowledge exists in two forms: that which we hold on our own and that which is held by others. Modern humans, in his view and in contrast to earlier societies, hold exceptionally small amounts of knowledge of the world on their own and are much more reliant upon knowledge held by experts[14], producing the problem of conflating their own knowledge with that held by others. Harari highlights this problem through the example of an experiment in which respondents were asked to rate their confidence in their understanding of the functioning of a zipper. This information was then compared to their ability to accurately describe it, with the result that most failed in the description while being highly confident of their understanding of how a zipper worked (Harari 2018, 222). The same effect was reported by Sloman and Fernbach (2017) regarding toilets and bicycles.

Because of the proliferation of information in the modern era and the amount of second-hand (or third- or fourth-hand) knowledge within the pool of available information, people now have a greater ability to pick and choose the sources of their information instead of being constrained by more traditional information hierarchies. This ability to engage in confirmation

[13] The criticisms of Sloman and Fernbach arise mainly from philosophical epistemology and go to the logical and semantic structure of their argument rather than its substance.

[14] Easterly's (2014) *Tyranny of the Experts* is focused upon the problem of economic aid and development in the poorer nations of the world rather than the nature of knowledge, but his choice of title amply illustrates this perceived reliance.

bias, even to the point of willful ignorance, by limiting the sources of information may produce an "echo chamber" effect where information which radically contradicts the dominant narrative within a group is excluded such that the group members or adherents receive only information which agrees with the dominant group narrative (Levendusky 2013). The worst-case result is that economic policies, foreign policies, environmental policies, and the like are suggested to and implemented by decision-makers who base their decisions upon information which comports with their views or the views they wish to advance rather than upon direct examination of the phenomena they seek to regulate. Thus, decision-makers (and ordinary citizens, for that matter) can "know" that tax cuts stimulate economic growth, while other citizens can "know" that they do not, or they may "know" that human activities do or do not affect the climate. This is hardly a new phenomenon or a new identification of it, but when the cognitive effort to understand the things that "it depends" depends on exceeds the willingness or capacity to expend that effort, the impacts of groupthink and external rather than internal knowledge can culminate in the production of simplistic explanations based upon competing facts regarding any given problem. The literature on whether education is the solution to this problem is somewhat mixed. For example, and speaking specifically to the climate change issue, see Braman, et al. (2012) who find that conformity to in-group biases overrides information which conflicts with those biases and Guy, et al. (2014) who find that it does not, however see Taber and Lodge (2006) that people are biased information processors generally.

1.5 POLARIZATION IS NOT INCIVILITY

Having examined what polarization is, a brief examination of what it is not is in order. In contrast to simple divergence, polarization is not declining civility in political discourse. The expectation of civility is rooted in social norms, and thus falls within the conception of

institutions advanced by North (1991, 97) as encompassing "the constraints that structure political, economic, and social interaction" and that advanced by Skocpol (1995) as being actual patterns of communication. DiMaggio, et al. (1996) noted that incivility and polarization were distinguishable as one did not require the presence of the other but allowed that a link between the two might exist. Thus, incivility goes to the manner in which divergence is expressed, but not to the underlying divergence. It is possible that polarization and incivility may be mutually reinforcing, creating a feedback loop such that uncivil discourse leads to higher issue salience in the news media, which leads to the acceptance of incivility[15] and a loosening of the social norms governing discourse, leading to greater incivility, which leads to higher salience of the incivility, and so forth. At some point the original issue gets lost in an *ad hominem* problem where the messenger is perceived as having become the message. Thus, polarization may cause incivility, incivility may cause polarization, or the two may be mutually reinforcing, but because a thing cannot cause itself, the two must be distinguishable.

1.6 POLARIZATION IS NOT SORTING

Care must be exercised in distinguishing polarization from sorting, which is a different but perhaps related process. Polarization necessarily implies sorting because if the two parties do not disagree on a given issue, they cannot be distinguished on that issue. Voters can be sorted, as in knowing which party holds positions closest to or farthest from their own views, without necessarily holding those exact views themselves. For present purposes, sorting is defined as the process through which voters identify with the political party which most closely matches their views and positions. Sorting might include some of the effects of polarization, such as animosity toward an opposing party or group or acceptance of more extreme issue positions, but it is

[15] See Morrow (2018) for one case, but the reasoning is extensible.

distinguishable in that it describes the homogenization of the political parties rather than issue divergence generally. Duverger's (1954) seminal work held that political parties in majoritarian systems would tend to be what are now called "big tents," encompassing a broad range of political, ideological, and issue positions.[16] When used in conjunction with the classic median voter theorem's idea of the need to appeal to the voters in the middle of the political spectrum to win elections, George Wallace's observation (quoted in Pearson 1998) of there not being "a dime's worth of difference" between the major parties is the logical and inevitable outcome. Rossiter (1960, 108) more formally observed, "There is and can be no real difference between the Democrats and Republicans, because the unwritten laws of American politics demand that the parties overlap substantially in principle, policy, character, appeal, and purpose—or cease to be parties with any hope of winning a national election." Those who significantly deviated from centrality in a general election campaign, such as Barry Goldwater in 1964 or George McGovern in 1972,[17] did so at their peril.

In this conception of sorting, the literature tends to support two propositions which can be accepted with some degree of confidence. First, causal directionality runs from political elites to the broader electorate (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998, Carmines and Stimson 1989, Levendusky 2009)[18]. In other words, elites sort first, and the electorate follows, which runs contrary to the popular conception of parties responding to constituent demands (but see Achen and Bartels (2016) that many popular conceptions of American political processes are inaccurate,

[16] Pluralistic systems, by contrast, would tend toward more narrowly constrained positions based in ideology.

[17] Goldwater won a bit more than 38% of the popular vote but won slightly less than 10% of the electoral vote, carrying only five states of the Deep South and his home state of Arizona, for a total of 52 electoral votes. McGovern did far worse in that he carried only one state (Massachusetts) and the District of Columbia while gaining approximately the same share of the popular vote (38%) as Goldwater.

[18] Campbell (2018, 53-55) proposes that the electorate had been polarized long before the parties caught up. He asserts that this lag was due to incumbency advantages, stable partisan identifications, and the lack of a viable Republican party in the South. The sorting of the parties in the 1980s and 1990s may have revealed an existing condition, but did not create it.

misleading, or just plain wrong). A second acceptable proposition is that the more politically active and attentive members of the electorate are better sorted than the rest (Abramowitz 2010 and 2013, Fiorina 2017**)**, which is also in keeping with the first proposition when Bawn, et al.'s (2012) theory of special interest-driven elites is added.

Wallace's and Rossiter's observations regarding the necessity of elite centrality, while undoubtedly accurate at their time and in their context, are exceptionally suspect in today's political environment. Regional party realignments during the Reagan and post-Reagan periods resulted in a strengthening of the Republican Party at the expense of the Democratic Party in the South, coupled with a similar strengthening of the Democratic Party in former Republican strongholds in the northeast and elsewhere (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998, Carmines and Stimson 1989, and Hill and Tausanovitch 2015). While one might generally assert that where a Southern Democrat was conservative 40 years ago, a Southern Republican is conservative today[19], with the result that the two national parties are more ideologically homogeneous than at any time in the post-WWII era; in other words, Duverger's big tents have become much smaller over time.

Fiorina (2017) argues that while this regional realignment of the parties is real, the issue preferences of the broader electorate are such that the majority of citizens (or at least a plurality of them, see Abramowitz 2010 and Pew Research Center 2014) are presented with parties and candidate choices that do not represent their views and are reduced to supporting the one that is least distasteful (see Weber 2018 for a more thorough discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of negative voting) or sitting on the sidelines. In Fiorina's view, voters are presented with polarized choices rather than being polarized themselves, so expressing a preference for a

[19] Or at least more conservative than their Democratic counterpart. If South is controlled for in the previous DW-NOMINATE analysis, the Southern Democrat line is more conservative than the Democrat mean from the late 1920s through the present.

particular party or voting for a less centrist candidate is not indicative of the voter being any less centrist than previously, but is more indicative of the shrinking of the two parties' tents, meaning that the voter must either choose the least uncomfortable tent or be left standing in the rain.

In using "sorting" as a description of political tendencies in the electorate, I do not include Bishop's (2008) conception of it as being a phenomenon of individuals intentionally seeking out and forming communities of the politically like-minded in their decisions of where to live. Although neighborhoods of the 1950s and 1960s were social centers, they are not such in the early 21st century. Howard, Gibson, and Stolle (2005) found that almost half (46.2%) of respondents knew a quarter of their neighbors or less, including 6.3% who knew none, and almost 85% of respondents reported discussing politics with their neighbors "rarely" (29.1%) or "never" (54.5%).

1.7 Causal Directionality Among the Politically Active

When examining the broader electorate, as previously discussed, the causality arrow for polarization appears to run from elites to the electorate. Thus, elites sort and polarize, and the mass public follows. This is not necessarily the case when examining elites as a distinct set of political actors[20]. Abramowitz appears to be correct in his assertion that the most politically active segments of the populace are also the most polarized, but his earlier works do not directly address causality. His most recent work (Abramowitz 2018) does, but his approach and data require careful reading and analysis. His basic premise is that extremism leads to activism, which in turn leads to polarization. In other words, strongly held beliefs about one or more issues lead to voters becoming more politically active and it is the participation of these extreme voters that leads to the adverse effects of polarization. This is at odds with some research (e.g. Munson

[20] By "elites" I mean not only appointed and elected officeholders at various levels of government, but also party activists, workers, financial donors (following Carmines and Woods (2002) and Shafer (1998)), and issue activists (following Bawn, et al. 2012).

2009) which indicates that it is activism which leads to extremism. This question matters as far as trying to alleviate the adverse effects of polarization because if the more moderate segments of the populace become more active in politics (presumably by demanding more moderate candidates with more moderate policy positions), but activism makes them less moderate, then the solution not only compounds the problem, but does not comport with some recent experimental research (Woon 2018) on the Median Voter Theorem (MVT).

1.8 THE MEDIAN VOTER THEOREM

The MVT mostly arises from the seminal work of Downs (1957) in which voters and voting may be treated as being similar to consumers and purchasing. Since Downs is an economist, I initially phrase the description in commercial terms and begin by noting that the Downsian one-dimensional spatial model in an election scenario assumes an approximately normal distribution of policy preferences among all potential voters. The median point is not stationary with respect to the spectrum of all positions and preferences but may be thought of as a stationary point with respect to the spectrum of possible positions and preferences within a given frame of reference. For example, full state control of the media is a position which exists in the complete policy space but is not viewed as possible within the American policy space, so effectively does not exist as a viable preference within that space.

Under the Downsian median voter framework, commodity producers (parties and candidates) are strategic and forward-looking. They advertise their products (policies) to consumers (voters), who are the sole possessors of a resource (votes) which the producers want[21]

[21] Downs (1957) proposes the office as the goal for the parties and candidates with the party wishing to accumulate the largest share of offices and the party's candidate as the holder of the office. Another way of considering this situation is to view the policy or the ability to implement policy as the goal and the accumulation of votes as having value for its utility. I prefer the latter as the ability to implement is necessarily prior to policy, but both approaches will work for present purposes. Downs' conception of office-seeking might be attributed to the heterogeneity of the

and who are also strategic and forward-looking. As there are only two major producers (the Democratic and Republican parties), the central idea of the theorem is that they must each compete for the largest share of the consumer base (the electorate). To accumulate the greatest amount of wealth (political support), parties and candidates try to entice the largest section of the consumer base whose brand loyalty is not assured into purchasing their product. Because the purchasing preferences of their brand-conscious customers (solid partisans) are mostly assured, the focus of their advertising (campaigns) is on the center of the spectrum since the center represents the smallest distance between all points on the spectrum and those resources are the ones which could go to their competitor. In this conception, the producers want to "make the sale" because it "deprives the competition of the sale." One might consider that negative campaign advertising is not designed to show how one producer's product better serves the customer's interests, but to show that the competitor's product (or the competitor itself) is hostile to those interests.

In more academic terms and assuming a one-dimensional policy space; forward-looking and strategic (or sincere) voters, candidates, and parties; and policy-oriented motivations, the MVT proposes that candidates and parties will converge on the policy preferences of the voter at the median point of the spectrum. This can be applied to both one-stage elections (assume only a general election) or two-stage elections (primary and general election). Recent work by Woon (2018) noted that while the MVT predicted convergence on the median voter's ideal point regardless of whether candidates and voters were strategic or sincere in their platform and vote choices, a two-stage election process would tend to produce more ideologically homogeneous parties because the primary elections would tend to weed out candidates who were either too

parties during the 1950s while the policy-oriented conception may reflect increasing party homogeneity which allows the parties to behave more monolithically with respect to policy.

close to or too far from the median primary voter's ideal point, thus producing median partisan ideal points which deviate from the broader spectrum's median. Data from Woon's experiments tend to show that primary voters may be recognizing that more extreme candidates could not win in a general election, but the more centrist stance of the moderate candidate was likely to produce fewer policy benefits in relation to the status quo. In effect, they split the difference between the two in their voting. Projecting those findings forward through a series of primary elections would seem to verify the idea of an incremental movement toward candidate positions which deviate farther from the median over time, which broadly comports with the polarization narrative. Woon works well within his set of initial assumptions, but where he fails to satisfy is in his inability to include other factors, such as the incumbency advantage or the regional dominance of one party, which would tend to skew the outcomes. Additionally, his experiments used only two candidates. In primary elections with an incumbent[22] this is not the more common scenario as incumbents traditionally face uncontested primaries, but in primary elections without an incumbent, the field of candidates is commonly much larger than two. This is not so much a flaw in Woon's theoretical framework as it is more a limitation imposed by the experimental environment which might be overcome in future work.

In summary, polarization is the divergence of opinions on normative issues of importance. It is normal and desirable in its benign form, but fractious and harmful in its malignant form. It is not incivility or antipathy toward those holding opposing opinions, although the loosening of the norms of political discourse may be a contributing factor, which may in turn be feeding the underlying divergence. It is elite-driven, or at least elite-shaped, and political elites are the most polarized segment of the electorate. It is not sorting in the sense of the two

[22] About half of primaries for House and Senate incumbents were contested in 2018 (approximately 52% for Republicans and 48% for Democrats), about 45% were contested in 2016, and about 40% were contested in 2014.

major parties becoming more homogeneous and distinguishable, with voters taking cues from those distinctions in making their political choices, although a link between the two may exist. By the same token, when the parties become more homogeneous, they increasingly diverge from the median voter's ideal point over time but increasing divergence of the parties only means increasingly divergent choices for the voter, not that the voters themselves are becoming more divergent.

To borrow from Key (1966, 7), the "perverse and unorthodox argument" of this work is not that voters are not fools[23], but that the conventional approaches of ideology and issue divergence are insufficient to explain the accompanying and increasing animosity between sections of the electorate. In order to account for the current malignant effects of partisan antipathy or animosity, I propose that it arises from a group identity. Since the conventional approaches, such as those of Abramowitz, Campbell, and Fiorina, among others, take the ideological and issue-based paths to polarization, I begin with these in the next chapter. However, I further propose that partisanship is its own social identity, rather than arising out of other identities. It does not require the adoption of any underlying ideology and it does not require the adoption of any definitive set of issue preferences or positions, although prior or subsequent adoption is not precluded. It only requires a conception of who and what are "not us" as a basis of the identity and a willingness to see out-group members as united in seeking to harm in-group interests or to undermine the institutions within which the in-group operates. In its more extreme forms, out-group members may be perceived as enemies rather than people with whom one might disagree. Chapter 2 will examine the traditional ideological framework for polarization and show that it is at best a weak explainer of attitudes and affect between in- and out-group members. Chapter 3 will examine the partisan framework in a similar fashion and will

[23] One need not fool all of the people; only enough to tip the scales in a close election.

propose that partisan identity is the more parsimonious explainer of attitudes toward members of the out-group. Chapter 4 will compare and discuss the findings of the two models, explore some of the normative implications of the findings from the previous chapters, identify unanswered questions, and propose directions for future research.

Chapter 2: Ideology and Identity

Who are you?
Who, who, who, who?
-- "Who Are You?" The Who, 1978, lyrics by Pete Townshend

In order to bridge the divisions between Abramowitz, Fiorina, and other polarization researchers, one must first start from their conceptions of it. Definitions were discussed in the previous chapter, but those definitions exist within a framework based in an ideological and issue-based conception of political attitudes. This chapter will examine that framework by examining the traditional conception of ideology as arising out of the liberal-conservative spatial model, how it is normally operationalized in public opinion survey instruments, discuss some perceived flaws in the operationalization and presentation, and test the usefulness of this conception as an identity ("I am a liberal/conservative" or "She/He is a liberal/conservative") which explains attitudes and affect toward those who share that identity and those who do not. Attitudes are measured using the traditional feeling thermometer questions regarding liberals and conservatives, with multiple controls for the identity group of the respondent. I propose that the ideological basis for identity is a weak explainer of these attitudes at best. To the greatest extent possible, I exclude partisan identities and attitudes from this framework as these will be examined in Chapter 3.

Following DiMaggio, et al. (1996) and Evans (2003), which carries the DiMaggio framework forward with additional datapoints and similar findings, the preferred method of assessing political attitudes has been to link them to an underlying ideology. Since ANES, GSS, and other large-N national surveys ask respondents to self-place on a liberal-conservative spectrum, the liberal-conservative dimension has formed the basis of this approach. This is not without its own set of problems, as will be discussed, but the general method has been to examine the relationship between issue positions and the respondents' self-declared ideological leanings to establish ideology as the basis for polarization. However, the tendency has been to

move from this to using ideology as a proxy for partisanship, resulting in the conclusion that liberals (as a proxy for Democrats) and conservatives (as a proxy for Republicans) are polarized. Recall from the Chapter 1 that *polarization* is simply divergent opinions on political issues and *antipathy* or *partisan antipathy* describes its noisier manifestations, while *partisan sorting* occurs when ideology aligns with party or vice versa.

A relevant, but nuanced point from the work of the DiMaggio group is that polarization cannot exist without four critical component: (1) the amount of dispersion within groups (to return to the Duverger (1954) analogy, "how big/small are the tents?"), (2) bimodality (the distance between the tents), (3) opinion constraint (the extent to which an opinion on one issue is predictive of opinion on another), and (4) consolidation of opinions along socially significant lines (who is inside the tents). The first three are important, but not particularly relevant to the task at hand, while the fourth is the point of greatest interest at present. What is commonly called polarization, or *antipathy* to use the more appropriate term, requires an "us vs. them" mentality[24], and "us" must be framed around salient social identities, whether that be male/female, believer/nonbeliever, class distinctions, race/ethnicity, native/nonnative, or the like. The conclusion from this line of reasoning is that if the contributors to the liberal-conservative dimension are socially based, then the liberal-conservative dimension itself must be socially based. This assumption comports with data collected in the various opinion and attitude surveys. For example, it does not make much sense to ask about feelings toward "liberals" or "conservatives" unless they constitute an identifiable in- or out-group. To the extent that most of our basic theories of political behavior were constructed during the two or three post-war decades when the two major parties were very heterogenous, liberalism and conservatism were convenient and perhaps even necessary proxies for these beliefs and attitudes as the tendency among the two parties has historically been to distinguish on a handful of issues while ignoring the rest. If the partisan sorting discussed in the previous and next chapters has indeed produced

[24] "Them," or attitudes toward a specific out-group, may also be taken as "not us," or attitudes toward any who are not perceived as in-group without necessarily being referential to any specific out-group.

more ideologically homogeneous parties, then ideological and partisan identities should produce similar effects and work as approximately equal explainers of the attitudes toward in- and out-group members.

2.1 Liberalism, Conservatism, and Identity

Abramowitz (*passim*, but Abramowitz and Saunders 2005, 2006, 2008, and Abramowitz 2010 and 2013 particularly) relies heavily on issues and ideology as the basis of polarization. This is not an especially controversial approach from a theoretical standpoint, though it is subject to practical objections. To illustrate, I consider the 7-point ideological self-placement question[25], which has been administered in every ANES survey since 1972. When comparing a respondent's self-placement on this question to their responses to specific issue preference questions, the results are often inconsistent, making the self-placement question or the issue preference questions (or both) unreliable as measures of ideological leanings, so some critiques of this method of ascribing ideological preference should at least be examined before proceeding.

One line of critique of this ideological approach arises out of Converse ((1964) 2006), who asserted that the American electorate is too ideologically unsophisticated for "liberal" and "conservative" to have much meaning. As Converse described it, the variation in issue preferences when compared to respondents' self-proclaimed ideological leanings was too random, so any assumption of a liberal-conservative dimension to the judgements of most of the electorate was "far-fetched" ((1964) 2006, 17). In support of this criticism, researchers have traditionally turned to conflicting issue attitudes, levels of political information, open-ended responses, and other data to demonstrate that the respondents' beliefs in these areas either do or do not align with their chosen label. When the preferences significantly deviate from the expected preferences implied by the label, the normal conclusion is that respondents are too unsophisticated for such a label to be meaningful. I take a somewhat different approach to

[25] The wording varies slightly between surveys and administrations, but the respondent is asked to place themselves on a 1-7 scale from "extremely liberal" to "extremely conservative." "Moderate" is usually labeled as the middle position in most administrations and "or haven't you thought about it much" is commonly included in the ANES version of the question.

examining the lack of what Converse called "constraint" in the electorate but arrive at much the same conclusion through an examination of the question of support for or opposition to abortion as reflected in the General Social Survey (GSS) (Smith, et al., 1972-2016).

The GSS is a survey of political attitudes similar to ANES and has been administered nationally on at least a bi-annual basis since 1972[26]. I use it in preference to the ANES data because of the way in which the abortion question was presented to respondents. This issue was chosen for several reasons, but mostly because (1) it is an issue where attitudes have tended to be exceptionally persistent[27], (2) it is a particularly divisive and long-lived issue, so there are considerable amounts of data available, and (3) the GSS survey presented the question in a form where the responses can be cross-checked against each other for consistency. In contrast to the ANES, which assessed abortion attitudes through a single question, the GSS measured attitudes toward the issue through a series of questions where the aim was to assess support for or opposition to abortion in a set of specific circumstances rather than with looser response options as is done with ANES[28]. In keeping with the limited vocabulary of Schattschneider's sovereign, GSS respondents were only provided with "yes," "no," and "don't know" responses. The specific circumstances included cases where the pregnancy is "as a result of rape," if "the woman's own health is seriously endangered," if there is "a strong chance of a serious defect in the baby," if the family "cannot afford more children," if the woman does not want more children, if the woman does not want to marry the father, and "for any reason." One would expect that respondents who supported legal abortion "for any reason" would also support legal abortion in all six subcases, but the data do not support this. Figure 2.1 (below) shows responses to the "for any reason"

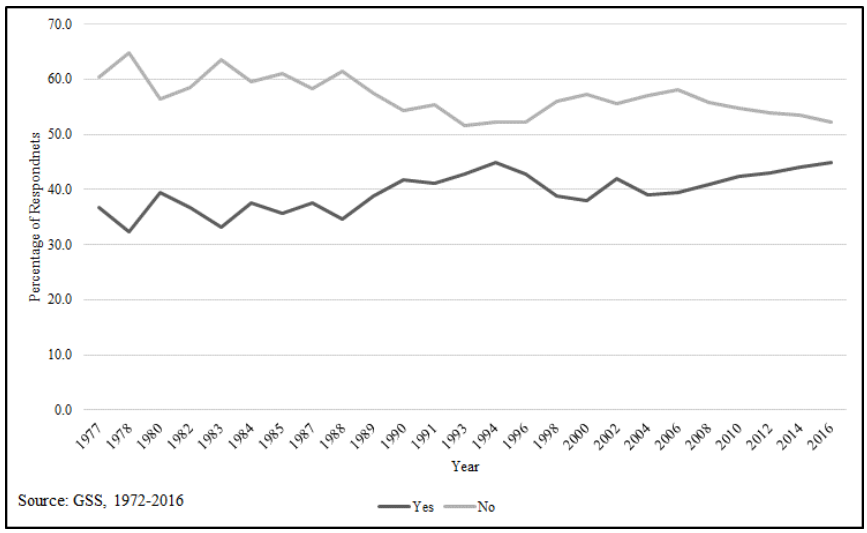
[26] The administration of GSS in odd-numbered years has been sporadic, but for even-year administrations, 1992 is the only year for which there is no data and, in contrast to ANES, its codebook notes variations in the order of question presentation.

[27] Achen and Bartels (2006) reported attitudinal stability on abortion at .59 over a 15-year panel study. In comparison, partisan stability, "the customary gold standard for attitudinal stability" (*ibid,* 34) was .63.

[28] The current (1980 to present) version of the ANES question asks about exceptions for "rape, incest, and when the woman's life is in danger" or for a clearly established need in addition to those reasons. Otherwise it is an "always allowed" or "never allowed" presentation.

question.[29] Comparison of the responses to this question with the other six cases showed that some respondents who agreed that abortion should not be legal in one or more of the narrower conditions, agreed that it should be legal in the broader condition. On average, about 16% changed position in the case of a woman not wanting any more children, 11% changed position in the case of not being able to afford more children, 10% changed position in the case of not wanting to marry the father, 2.2% changed position in the case of fetal defects, 1.4% changed position in the case of rape, and about 1% changed position when the mother's health was endangered. Since the "for any reason" condition was consistently presented as the last in this series of questions (NORC 2017, 466-468), the respondent had already responded "no" to abortion being allowable under at least one condition before responding that it should be allowable under any conditions.

Figure 2.1: Support for Abortion "For Any Reason"



With this amount of inconsistency within a salient issue domain and one where respondents have strongly held beliefs and preferences, the concerns about inconsistency between a professed and significantly more abstract ideological label and specific issue preferences are not surprising. And yet, as with the abortion respondents who said "yes" in the

[29] The "don't know" and "no answer" responses were excluded from the chart but accounted for a combined 4.3% of responses on average.

"for any reason" case, the liberal-conservative respondent adopts an ideological label, which must hold some level of meaning for them despite their holding issue positions which conflict with it. All that the remaining data on issue preferences demonstrate is that the respondent's understanding of "liberal" and "conservative" and the researcher's understanding of the terms are different, not that the respondent has no understanding of the terms. It was perhaps with this inconsistency in mind that ANES asked respondents what it meant to be liberal or conservative. That it was only done once[30] may be indicative of the difficulty (or futility) of pursuing that line of inquiry.

If ideology is based in salient social group identity as the DiMaggio group assumes, but the self-identifying group member does not hold preferences which comport with the overarching identity, then the self-placement must be based in some other characteristic. A possible suspect is that the respondent places themselves relative to one or more notable in- and/or out-group figures rather than issue preference. In this case, the ideological label is proxying for the like/dislike of that figure rather than specific issue preferences. A useful test of this approach to the meaning of the response might be to present the respondent with a list of notable figures whose issue preferences are known and measurable, ask if they are familiar with that person, and then ask if the respondent thinks they are higher/lower or about the same on the scale as that person. The resulting data might be more indicative of the respondent's perception of others than an accurate self-assessment, but it would perhaps be less "fuzzy" than the present data. Worth noting is that Pew Research sometimes takes something like this approach in its surveys. Most respondents in a recent publication (Pew 2018), when presented with a 0 (liberal) to 10 (conservative) scale tend to place themselves between positions 3 and 7, effectively "moderate" or slightly to the left or right of it. Democrats, on average, placed the Democratic Party at 3.9, while Republicans placed it at 1.5, on average, with 55% of Republicans placing it at 0. Republicans, on average, placed the Republican Party at 7.1, while Democrats placed it at

[30] In 1992, respondents were presented with two open-ended questions: "What does it mean to say that someone's views are [liberal/conservative]?"

7.4, on average, with 33% of Democrats placing it at 10. Some take-ways from this data are that people often tend to see others as holding more extreme positions than they actually do, although it is interesting to note that Republicans' view of the liberalism of the Democratic Party is significantly more extreme than Democrats' view of the Republican Party's conservatism.

A second line of critique arises out of the idea that terms like "liberal" or "conservative" are essentially symbolic representations rather than an aggregation of beliefs. This line of thinking seems to go back to the ideas of post-modernists such as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jean-Francois Lyotard, and others, who maintained that most things (words, concepts, social practices, art, etc.) reflect a relationship between symbols rather than a relationship between symbols and real things[31], to the extent that our entire understanding of the world is mediated by such symbols. But, like the first line of critique, this one inevitably arrives at the same conclusion that understandings of "liberal" and "conservative" as symbolic representations are different rather than the symbols having no meaning for the person who uses them.

A third line of critique arises from the variation of responses within categories. Campbell (2018) examined Ellis and Stimson's (2012) modified version of Free and Cantril's (1967) concept of "operational ideology." Under this conception, a self-identified conservative, for example, who supported more funding for education, social safety nets, urban renewal programs, or the like was not behaving in line with the adopted label and one might wonder whether the respondent was more attached to the label than the underlying ideology.[32] The reality is likely simpler than the critique would have one believe. If a respondent finds that "on the whole" or "more often than not" they hold conservative positions on a range of issues, then they might feel justified in asserting that they are conservative under the assumption that ideology is a dimmer switch rather than a binary condition. By the same reasoning, a respondent might also be

[31] This idea in the modern era arguably arises out of Charles Saunders Peirce's categories of "firstness," "secondness," and "thirdness" (Peirce 1868), although the idea of reality being mediated by symbols can be traced back at least as far as Plato and Aristotle.

[32] This line of reasoning perhaps was the basis for many staunch Republican commentators, beginning sometime in the 1990s, to refer to their more centrist party members as RINOs (Republican in Name Only).

indicating that they do not identify with the opposite label more than they identify with the chosen label. At its core, though, the self-identification question itself is a binary condition (liberal or conservative) and is frequently operationalized as such. If, for example, a respondent believes that the harmful effects of extreme poverty might be more effectively addressed by alleviating its causes rather than addressing its effects, then they have effectively decided that one proposed solution is more palatable than the other, even though both are aimed at dealing with something most would agree is a problem. The difference is that one solution is not perceived as being *as conservative* or *as liberal* as the other.

This returns to the idea broached in the previous chapter that "liberal" and "conservative," like "fast" and "slow," are relative rather than absolute terms, but researchers who have been focused on the perceived inconsistency between the respondents' adopted label and their issue preferences have generally treated them as absolutes. Ellis and Stimson (2012), for example, concluded that nearly two-thirds of self-identified conservatives favored spending policies that were more in line with liberal positions than conservative ones, and viewed these respondents as being conflicted conservatives or liberals with a conservative veneer, seemingly more attached to the label than the underlying ideology. The idea that nearly two-thirds of conservative respondents appear to have no idea of what being conservative means is very bold claim and because it is one made by very well-respected researchers who rigorously ground that claim in their data, it should be given serious consideration.

To examine this question (see Tables 2.1 and 2.2 below), I use two indicators of spending (the methodology for the construction of these may be found in Appendix A): social spending (aid to the poor, aid to the homeless, federal student aid, foreign aid, social security, etc.) and what might be broadly thought of as spending for "public goods" in the form of spending for defense, crime, and schools. Each has received its share of support and criticism with respect to impacts on federal budgets from candidates and commentators on both sides of the spectrum, so all are salient to some degree. I use a simple additive index of the issue responses, coding each issue as -1 for preferences that spending in that area be increased, 1 for preferences that spending

be decreased, and 0 for preferences that spending be kept "about the same." Respondents who did not express a preference or were not asked a question were treated as missing datapoints. While the number of spending issues reported in the CDF has varied from administration to administration, it is not the specific issue that is being examined, but the issue of spending in general. For the final indicator, negative numbers may be understood as signifying that respondents prefer increases in social spending "on the whole" while positive numbers would indicate preferences for reductions in social spending "on the whole." The amount of increase or decrease preferred is not explored. Non-Ideologues include respondents who responded to the self-placement question with "don't know" or "haven't thought much about it" and any respondent who was unable to identify the Republican Party as being the more conservative party at the national level. Because the self-placement question was not asked prior to 1972, spending preference questions in earlier administrations are not used.

Table 2.1: Ideology and Preferences for Federal Social Spending

Self-Reported Ideology	Preferred Change in Spending (% of Respondents)			
	Increase	Same	Decrease	Total*
Liberal (17.4%)	69.0%	12.6%	7.9%	89.5%
Moderate (14.7%)	53.0%	16.4%	16.8%	86.2%
Conservative (24.6%)	30.8%	18.1%	39.2%	88.1%
Non-Ideologue (43.3%)	62.2%	11.4%	8.9%	82.5%
Total (100.0%)	63.4%	16.3%	20.3%	100.0%
Source: ANES CDF, 1948-2016 * totals do not sum to 100 because "don't know" respondents on individual spending questions were treated as "missing"				

For "public goods" spending, I use preferences for spending on defense, federal spending on crime, and preferences for spending on public schools. Defense spending was presented on a 1 to 7 scale, so was recoded with -1 favoring decreased spending, 1 favoring increased spending, and 0 (4 on the scale of the response set) being taken as "about the same." Spending on crime and public schools were presented as 3-point scales and were treated the same as the social spending questions.

Table 2.2: Ideology and Preferences for Federal Spending on Public Goods

Self-Reported Ideology	Preferred Change in Spending (% of Respondents)			
	Increase	Same	Decrease	Total*
Liberal (17.4%)	54.5%	25.1%	10.0%	89.6%
Moderate (14.7%)	61.3%	17.7%	11.8%	90.8%
Conservative (24.6%)	59.6%	18.2%	10.3%	88.1%
Non-Ideologue (43.3%)	60.8%	15.6%	5.7%	82.1%
Total (100.0%)	69.5%	21.4%	9.1%	100.0%
Source: ANES CDF, 1948-2016 * totals do not sum to 100 because "don't know" respondents on individual spending questions were treated as "missing"				

This data tends to somewhat support Ellis and Stimson's (2012) thesis, but it is worth noting that with regard to social spending, only about 30% of Conservatives expressed preferences in favor of increasing it and close to 40% favored decreasing it, while Liberals and Moderates appear to be overwhelmingly in favor of not decreasing social spending. It is also worth noting that self-identified conservatives had the largest number of missing datapoints attributable to "don't know" or "haven't thought much about it" responses. I do not approach these types of responses as being functionally equivalent to "no preference" and treat them as missing instead. Across all ideological categories, respondents appear to be overwhelmingly in favor of maintaining or increasing spending on services which could be classified as "public goods," a stance somewhat at odds with the general depiction of liberals being "dovish" or "anti-establishment." Ideological leanings do show significant marginal effects on spending preferences for social spending (coef. 0.65, $p<0.001$) and have a little explanatory power ($r^2=0.20$), but this is not the case for public goods spending (coef. -0.06, $p<0.001$), where their explanatory power is almost nonexistent ($r^2=0.005$). Although this is not an exceptionally rigorous examination of the utility of liberal or conservative leanings as an indicator of spending preferences, the assumption of spending *per se* as a proxy for ideological leaning should be approached cautiously as the question of spending "for what" seems to be much more important and salient than spending in general.

To continue the earlier point of "liberal" and "conservative" being relative rather than absolute labels and proposing that it would be more efficacious to treat them as such, the question of "relative to what?" remains unanswered and may be unanswerable. An issue preference may be *more liberal than* or *more conservative than* some other preference on that issue, but absent a generally accepted standard of what "liberal," "conservative," or even "centrist" mean, their use as an ideological measure lacks operationalizability. The idea of the partisan "big tents" that arose out of Duverger (1954) are equally applicable to ideology, especially in the American context. Thus, liberalism and conservatism can encompass a wide range of issue positions that allow the respondent to have their own conception of where they sit on that spectrum while still being liberal or conservative in comparison to something else. Whether it can form the basis of an identity remains to be seen.

A second but related criticism of looking for ideological consistency through the use of the liberal/conservative labels arises out of an assumption that may or may not be well-founded. If the two are relative positions as I have argued, is the depiction of an uninformed electorate sufficient to discount the ability of the respondent to base their self-identification on a comparison to some other reference point? Political attitudes in the United States do not exist in a vacuum and unaffected by externals. As an example, if someone were sufficiently liberal by domestic standards to support most of the Democratic Party's national platform, they would likely feel comfortable within the United Kingdom's Conservative Party, but probably be somewhat to the right of it on many issues, immigration being a notable exception.[33] Not being informed on national or international news, for example, does not mean that one is not exposed to ideological cues through other means. Conservative elite rhetoric regarding some proposal being socialist or Marxist-Leninist might serve to excite some portion of that base of voters who

[33] In 2000, the Democratic Party's stance on immigration was approximately in line with the Republican Party's position of enforcement of existing immigration laws with the addition of keeping undocumented migrants from being exploited by employers. In 2004, it began pushing for a path to citizenship for undocumented migrants. This stance would be decidedly contrary to the Conservative Party's current immigration plank.

see themselves as vehemently opposed to anything so labeled[34], but an American liberal may not see the proposal as being far enough left to rise to that level. For example, the United States is the only country in top 50, based on the Human Development Index (HDI), that does not provide for universal health care, at least on paper. Thus, when considering the liberalism or conservatism of a universal health care proposal within a purely domestic information environment, it would indeed be on the liberal side of the domestic spectrum, but it may be centrist or conservative when viewed within an international context. One should additionally keep in mind that while Sean Hannity can reasonably expect about 3 million viewers per week and Rachel Maddow attracts about 2.7 million, *Downton Abbey* attracted more than double their *combined* viewership. Without being able to control for those extraneous cues, the "liberal/conservative in comparison to what" problem further erodes of the utility of the self-placement response as an indicator for establishing polarization.

A last line of critique of the ideology and issue position approach to polarization through the "liberal" and "conservative" labels is that if the partisan sorting observations discussed in the previous chapter are at work, the issue position responses may currently provide a better indicator of partisan leanings than of ideological ones. The partisan line of inquiry will be addressed in Chapter 3, but assuming this to be the case, ideological self-placement may be working as a partial or full proxy for partisanship, which is not necessarily in keeping with the idea of ideology as identity, but it is in keeping with Abramowitz' and Campbell's treatment of it. To this extent, how the self-placement indicator is used becomes a critical piece of the identity puzzle.

The common practice for index indicators such as self-placement is to collapse the larger scale (7-point scale in the case of ideology) to something smaller, typically 3-point (liberal-moderate-conservative) or 5-point (liberal-moderate-conservative and something resembling

[34] For the other side of the argument, Godwin's Law (Godwin 1994) holds that as the length of any internet discussion increases, the probability of comparisons to Nazis or Hitler entering the discussion approaches 1, thus rendering much liberal rhetoric as susceptible to inflammatory labeling as its conservative counterparts.

"leaner"). A problem with this practice in that it creates an assumption of a binary condition (liberal/conservative and the rest don't really count) or the conflation of two or more categories so the dimmer-switch construction of the response set does not work as intended. Another issue is that the spatial model is one-dimensional, and the liberal/conservative question assumes this dimensionality. Unless a position is at one of the polar extremes[35], any point on that spectrum will always be "more conservative than" or "less conservative than" some other point, while simultaneously being "more liberal than" or "less liberal than" the same point. Absent an agreed-upon measure of where positions belong on the spectrum (the meaning ascribed to self-placement is ultimately relative to the researcher's understanding of the spectrum), charges of respondent inconsistency can be tossed about with impunity.

Figures 2.2 through 2.9 show the percentage of each response category on the 7-point self-placement scale in each ANES and GSS administration since 1972[36]. In order to keep the pre-1984 ANES respondents in line with those from 1984 and later and to be consistent with the GSS question, I do not make use of the ANES follow-up question[37]. Like the follow-up question for partisanship self-placement, the follow-up on the liberal-conservative dimension appears to assume that the "moderate" respondent or the respondent who "doesn't know" or "hasn't thought much about it" has an internal label that they are hiding from the researcher. This is a case where the respondent should be allowed to speak for themselves rather than being pigeon-holed by the survey question.

[35] See Rossiter (1955) for the idea that the linear spectrum might be better viewed as circular.
[36] The first GSS survey with this question was administered in 1974 and the NA responses were excluded for all administrations of both surveys.
[37] "If you had to choose, would you consider yourself a liberal or a conservative?"

Figure 2.2: Extremely Liberal Self-Placement

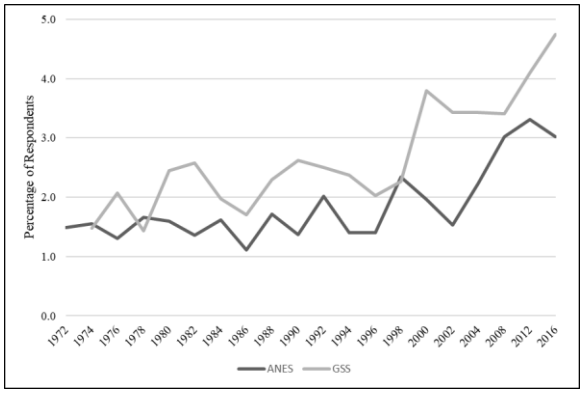


Figure 2.3 Extremely Conservative Self-Placement

Figure 2.4 Liberal Self-Placement

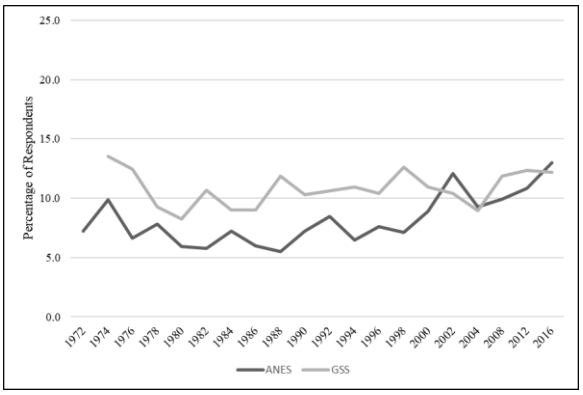


Figure 2.5 Conservative Self-Placement

Figure 2.6 Slightly Liberal Self-Placement

Figure 2.7 Slightly Conservative Self-Placement

Figure 2.8 Moderate Self-Placement

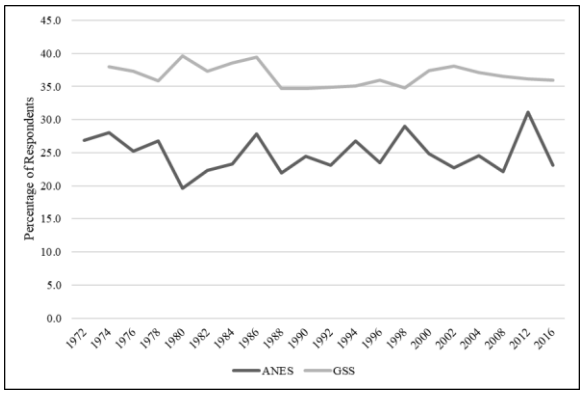


Figure 2.9 DK/Ref Self Placement

Three things are immediately noticeable on these charts. First, the line for the percentage of respondents who "didn't know" or refused to answer is significantly lower and much smoother in the GSS data. This may be due to the ANES respondent being offered a "haven't thought much about it" option that the GSS respondent was not offered. Second, the lines for the respondents who identify as "extremely" liberal or conservative appear to be rising sharply while those for the respondents who identify as "slightly" liberal or conservative appear to be declining, although at a lower rate. This is mostly due to the scale of the charts as both sets represent about a 2%-3% change in those response categories. Third, there is a noticeable difference between the two surveys across all response categories except "slightly conservative" and "conservative." While the lines for all categories generally go in the same directions at approximately the same times[38], there is an obvious difference which might be more attributable to who is being asked rather than what is being asked. On average, however, the percentage of respondents in each category for each of the surveys is approximately consistent, as shown in Table 2.3 below, with the difference in the "Moderate" category being perhaps mostly explainable in terms of the "haven't thought much about it" option offered to ANES respondents.

[38] ANES became a quadrennial survey in 2004, while GSS remained biannual, so there are no ANES datapoints for the 2006, 2010, 2012, and 2014 midterm administrations.

Table 2.3: Average Liberal-Conservative Self-Placement (1972-2016)

Category	GSS	ANES
Extremely Liberal	2.79	1.85
Liberal	11.02	8.15
Slightly Liberal	12.17	9.39
Moderate	36.92	24.82
Slightly Conservative	15.14	13.84
Conservative	14.28	14.29
Extremely Conservative	3.18	2.56
DK/Ref	4.50	25.10
Source: GSS, 1972-2016, and ANES CDF, 1948-2016		

2.2 TESTING IDEOLOGY AS IDENTITY

To test the ideology-as-identity approach and the ideological polarization narrative, I first check that ideological labels exist and are meaningful to the respondent. These are testable assumptions as the respondent's ability to self-place on the liberal-conservative dimension validates the existence of the labels and that "liberal" and "conservative" are terms within the respondent's functional vocabulary. The meaningfulness of the labels can be at least minimally tested by identifying the Republican Party as being the more conservative party at the national level. This indicator is basically RePass' (2008) PTR indicator[39], minus the feeling thermometer responses. Since I use the CDF, I immediately exclude all cases prior to 1972 and do not employ the follow-up question. I remove all cases where the post-election portion of the survey was not done because respondents who only completed the pre-election wave would have missing data for other variables as ANES is flexible in the presentation of each wave's questions. I also remove all respondents who were not asked this question[40] to avoid including their responses to other questions. One of RePass' coding decisions was that the DK/Ref/NA respondents should not be included with the moderates. I agree with and continue that reasoning by merely recoding

[39] RePass' findings, based in the 2004 ANES data, broadly comport with those of Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope ((2004) 2011), but a detailed analysis of them is outside the scope of the present work.

[40] This decision is problematic only for the 2000 administration where removal of the NA respondents leaves a sample size of 736. For the other administrations, the number of NA respondents is a couple of dozen or less.

them as “non-ideological” since they expressed no ideological leanings. This produces the distributions in Table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4: Ideological Self-Placement Distributions (Percent) 1972-2016

Year	Extreme Liberal	Liberal	Slight Liberal	Moder-ate	Slight Conserv.	Conserv.	Extreme Conserv.	Non-Ideo.	Total	*N*
1972	1.5	7.2	9.8	26.9	14.9	10.2	1.3	28.2	100.0%	2,155
1974	1.5	9.9	7.9	28.0	13.3	11.9	1.6	25.9	100.0%	1,550
1976	1.4	6.7	8.4	25.4	13.3	12.0	2.4	30.5	100.0%	1,893
1978	1.7	7.8	9.9	26.8	13.5	11.3	2.3	26.8	100.0%	2,284
1980	1.6	6.2	8.9	19.5	13.8	13.3	2.1	34.7	100.0%	1,362
1982	1.4	5.8	7.5	22.4	12.7	12.1	2.2	35.9	100.0%	1,400
1984	1.5	7.3	9.5	23.3	14.4	13.6	1.7	28.6	100.0%	1,971
1986	1.1	6.0	10.7	27.8	15.2	13.0	1.5	24.7	100.0%	2,170
1988	1.8	5.7	9.7	21.8	15.9	13.9	2.8	28.5	100.0%	1,771
1990	1.4	7.2	8.1	24.5	13.9	9.8	2.1	33.0	100.0%	1,967
1992	2.0	8.5	9.9	23.3	15.2	12.7	2.2	26.2	100.0%	2,250
1994	1.4	6.4	7.8	26.8	14.7	18.2	3.1	21.5	100.0%	1,784
1996	1.3	7.9	10.5	23.6	15.8	17.0	2.3	21.5	100.0%	1,532
1998	2.3	7.1	9.9	29.0	15.7	12.9	2.6	20.5	100.0%	1,280
2000	1.9	8.3	11.0	24.5	13.6	16.0	3.4	21.3	100.0%	736
2002	1.5	11.8	9.1	22.2	12.4	21.9	4.6	16.3	100.0%	1,335
2004	2.3	9.0	8.6	24.3	12.6	17.6	2.9	22.6	100.0%	1,065
2008	3.0	10.2	8.1	22.3	10.3	13.4	3.4	29.2	100.0%	2,098
2012	3.3	11.0	11.0	31.0	13.5	16.9	3.5	9.8	100.0%	5,480
2016	3.0	13.0	11.3	23.1	12.1	17.9	3.2	16.2	100.0%	3,639
Source: ANES CDF, 1948-2016										

Respondents who had missing data for which party was more conservative at the national level were removed from the dataset. This considerably shrinks the number of administrations available for use as the question has been inconsistently included since its introduction in 1960. As an added complication, a coding of zero for the remaining respondents has one of several meanings. For some respondents it means they did not provide a response (equivalent to “refused” in other ANES questions). This case is not a major concern because no answer is an answer for present purposes. For other respondents, it means that they were not asked the question. In 1972, 1,051 respondents were surveyed with a form that did not contain the

question, so they were dropped from the dataset. For 1984, 999 respondents completed the relevant wave via telephone interview and this question was not asked, so they were dropped from the dataset. For 1990, 994 respondents were surveyed with a form that did not include the question, so they were dropped from the dataset. Of the remaining respondents, those who could not identify the Republican Party as the more conservative party[41] had their self-placement response recoded as "Non-Ideologue" because the possession a meaningful understanding of "conservative" is not assumable without being able to identify the largest group which publicly and vehemently identifies as conservative. The inclusion of "at the national level" in the question framing is intended to eliminate confusion which might be attributable to regional or local party variations. The resulting dataset's distributions are shown in Table 2.5 below.

Table 2.5: Ideological Self-Placement Distributions (Percent) with Republicans as the More Conservative Party, 1972-2016

Year	Extreme Liberal	Liberal	Slight Liberal	Moder-ate	Slight Conserv.	Conserv.	Extreme Conserv.	Non-Ideo.	Total	*N*
1972	1.4	5.3	6.4	14.3	11.9	7.2	1.0	52.4	100.0	1,104
1976	0.9	5.5	6.1	14.3	9.8	9.5	1.6	52.3	100.0	1,893
1984	0.3	5.0	5.6	10.9	10.9	11.8	0.8	54.6	100.0	972
1988	1.1	4.1	6.5	12.6	10.6	10.8	2.3	51.9	100.0	1,771
1990	0.6	5.7	4.3	11.6	9.1	6.2	0.9	61.6	100.0	973
1992	1.2	7.1	6.9	13.8	10.5	9.3	1.2	49.9	100.0	2,250
2004	2.2	7.7	6.1	16.2	10.2	15.2	2.3	40.0	100.0	1,065
2008	2.0	8.5	5.8	12.2	6.9	10.7	2.1	51.7	100.0	2,098
2012	2.6	9.5	9.1	18.0	10.6	14.4	2.8	33.0	100.0	5,480
2016	2.9	11.8	9.4	14.2	10.4	16.6	3.0	31.6	100.0	3,639

Source: ANES CDF, 1948-2016

The results of this construction show that Abramowitz is partially correct in his assertion of a growing divide between liberals and conservatives as evidenced by the generally upward trends among both the Liberal and Conservative identifiers. However, in contrast to his general

[41] These would include respondents who did not know if one party was more conservative, thought there was no difference between the parties, knew that one was more conservative but not which one, or identified the Democrats as the more conservative party.

assertion in *The Disappearing Center* (2010), the percentage of moderate/middle-of-the-road respondents remains relatively consistent. What seems to be shrinking and disappearing are the non-ideological respondents, predominantly those who respond with "don't know" or "haven't thought much about it" to any of the component questions. Whether or not this is indicative of a growing level of information in the electorate is not as clear, but it could also be explainable in terms of the two parties becoming more ideologically homogeneous and ideology partially proxying for partisanship.

Both the "liberal vs. conservative" and "Democrat vs. Republican" versions of the polarization narrative are reminiscent of Mary Boykin Chesnut's (1905, 20) observation of the Civil War that "[North and South] are divorced because we have hated each other so." The interesting part of that observation is that there must be an identifiable object toward which the ill feelings can be directed for it to work. Extending Chesnut's observation to the present, one might expect that people with similar ideological identifications would be perceived as in-group, people with opposing ideological views would be perceived as out-group, and the ideological difference would drive the attitudes toward both the in- and out-group members. Liberals and conservatives, therefore, should have positive feelings toward their own group and less positive or negative feelings toward the other. To test this, I use the feeling thermometer questions for liberals and conservatives, excluding non-ideologues and DK/Ref/NA responses, but noting that having any level of feeling toward either group is indicative of the existence of that group as an identifiable object in the respondent's mind. If the data show this, then we should accept the proposition that ideology can be and is functioning as a form of social identity. Tables 2.6A, 2.6B, and Tables 2.7A, and 2.7B, below, show the results of a series of bivariate regressions using the two Feeling Thermometers as the dependent variable and self-placement as the independent variable while limiting the year of administration to view change over time.

Table 2.6A: Effect of Liberal Self-Placement (SP) on Feeling Thermometer (FT) Placement (non-ideologues excluded)

DV	IV	Year	Corr.	Coef.	SE	R^2
Liberals FT	SP (N=12,037)	All	-0.65	-11.05***	0.12	0.43
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=3,652)	All	-0.35	-9.19***	0.40	0.13
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=141)	1972	-0.23	-5.15**	1.88	0.05
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=234)	1976	-0.24	-6.24***	1.64	0.06
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=103)	1984	-0.32	-9.87**	2.96	0.10
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=203)	1988	-0.29	-8.12***	1.92	0.08
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=103)	1990	-0.36	-9.87***	2.56	0.13
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=342)	1992	-0.38	-9.07***	1.21	0.14
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=166)	2004	-0.25	-6.91**	2.06	0.06
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=332)	2008	-0.26	-6.78***	1.38	0.07
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=1,155)	2012	-0.39	-10.07***	0.69	0.16
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=973)	2016	-0.40	-9.79***	0.77	0.16
Source: ANES CDF, 1948-2016 * $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$ *** $p<0.001$						

Table 2.6B: Effect of Liberal Self-Placement (SP) on Feeling Thermometer (FT) Placement (non-ideologues excluded)

DV	IV	Year	Corr.	Coef.	SE	R^2
Conservatives FT	SP (N=12,037)	All	0.62	9.73***	0.11	0.39
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=140)	1972	0.35	9.62***	2.21	0.12
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=233)	1976	0.17	3.31	1.86	0.01
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=103)	1984	0.12	3.93	3.17	0.02
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=203)	1988	0.17	5.27*	2.17	0.03
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=102)	1990	0.22	8.07*	3.65	0.05
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=341)	1992	0.25	6.70***	1.43	0.06
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=167)	2004	0.13	4.10	2.37	0.02
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=332)	2008	0.19	5.57***	1.56	0.04
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=1,157)	2012	0.23	6.92***	0.86	0.05
	Liberal (SP<4) (N=874)	2016	0.32	10.55***	1.05	0.10
Source: ANES CDF, 1948-2016 * $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$ *** $p<0.001$						

Regarding liberals as an identifiable group, the idea that they view other liberals as in-group and conservatives as out-group is an acceptable proposition based on the data as the correlations and marginal effects all point to this conclusion. That they view other liberals more favorably than they view conservatives is also an acceptable proposition as the strength of liberal

self-placement is consistently significant and increases the liberal feeling thermometer rating by between five and ten degrees in all administrations without an equal change in the conservative feeling thermometer, but noting that "slight liberals" tend to express cooler feelings toward "liberals" than their more solidly ideological counterparts. That liberals show an increasing tendency to view conservatives unfavorably does seem supportable, but noting that in three of the ten administrations, this effect is weak and insignificant. It is a strong effect only in recent years and in 1972. For other years, it seems more prudent to propose that while they show greater warmth for the in-group, the out-group appears to receive some benefit of the doubt, although not as much as the in-group. What does not appear to be an acceptable proposition is that any of this is driven by ideological identity as the basis of the behavior. While the results regarding liberal self-placement on the liberal feeling thermometer rating are consistently significant, the explanatory power of this model is too low to be afforded much weight and the number of insignificant effects of liberal self-placement on the conservative feeling thermometer rating further detracts from it.

Table 2.7A: Effect of Conservative Self-Placement (SP) on Feeling Thermometer (FT) Placement (non-ideologues excluded)

DV	IV	Year	Corr.	Coef.	SE	R^2
Liberals FT	SP (N=12,037)	All	-0.65	-11.05***	0.12	0.43
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=5,175)	All	-0.34	-12.26***	0.47	0.12
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=217)	1972	-0.21	-6.68**	2.15	0.04
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=380)	1976	-0.27	-8.56***	1.54	0.08
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=224)	1984	-0.31	-11.21***	2.33	0.09
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=415)	1988	-0.33	-9.84***	1.38	0.11
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=156)	1990	-0.45	-16.98***	2.73	0.20
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=470)	1992	-0.38	-13.24***	1.47	0.15
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=292)	2004	-0.37	-12.60***	1.85	0.14
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=410)	2008	-0.26	-8.80***	1.63	0.07
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=1,525)	2012	-0.36	-12.86***	0.87	0.13
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=1,086)	2016	-0.35	-11.91***	0.96	0.12
Source: ANES CDF, 1948-2016 * $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$ *** $p<0.001$						

Table 2.7B: Effect of Conservative Self-Placement (SP) on Feeling Thermometer (FT) Placement (non-ideologues excluded)

DV	IV	Year	Corr.	Coef.	SE	R^2
Conservatives FT	SP (N=11,907)	All	-0.64	9.87***	0.11	0.41
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=5,191)	All	-0.38	10.53***	0.36	0.14
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=219)	1972	0.11	2.64	1.68	0.01
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=388)	1976	0.22	5.76***	1.29	0.05
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=226)	1984	0.29	7.06***	1.58	0.08
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=415)	1988	0.27	6.82***	1.22	0.07
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=153)	1990	0.25	6.90**	2.23	0.06
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=472)	1992	0.40	11.12***	1.18	0.16
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=295)	2004	0.37	10.36***	1.50	0.14
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=411)	2008	0.33	9.08***	1.27	0.11
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=1,524)	2012	0.42	12.64***	0.71	0.17
	Conservative (SP>4) (N=1,088)	2016	0.48	13.24***	0.73	0.23
Source: ANES CDF, 1948-2016 * $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$ *** $p<0.001$						

The picture presented by the data for conservatives is substantially different from that of liberals. First, the propositions that conservatives see conservatives as an identifiable in-group and liberals as an identifiable out-group are sound. That they view other conservatives favorably is also supported by the data. Unlike liberals, however, conservatives assign substantially greater disfavor to the out group than the favor they assign to the in-group, though this effect may be tapering off somewhat in the more recent survey data. But where liberals may have been willing to give some benefit of the doubt to the out-group, conservatives have not. Even in the years where the amount of disfavor appears to be falling, it is matched by greater favor afforded to the in-group, especially among the more solidly ideological identifiers. The explanatory power of this model seems to work better for conservatives than for liberals, but it remains on the weak side. It is interesting to note that, like their "slight liberal" counterparts, "slight conservative" respondents seem to be more critical of other conservatives, with conservative thermometer ratings of 50 or less being fairly common, especially in the 1984-1992 administrations. To this extent, the "slight" ideologues are exhibiting attitudes which might be expected from moderates or anti-ideologues.

The data for the "moderate" self-placers is mostly within expectations. With regard to Liberals, the mean placement for each administration generally stays within the 54-56 range with the lowest mean placement at 51.6 in 2012 and the highest at 60.1 in 1984, noting that the mean placements in 2004 and 2008 were fractionally over 59. For Conservatives, the data from the earlier administrations (1972-1990) shows that self-placed moderates viewed them between five and ten degrees more favorably than they did liberals, but for the later administrations (2012 and 2016, especially) conservatives are given a much cooler reception, even averaging a slightly sub-neutral 48 in 2012. This raises questions of the degree to which ideology is proxying for partisanship as the cooler ratings would seem to be more likely due to perceptions of Republican elites and supporters than to ideological shifts. But this is the question to which I shall turn in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Partisanship and Identity

The times they are a-changin'
--Bob Dylan, 1964.

Using partisan identification as the basis of polarization seems a much simpler and straightforward construct than using the more abstract and fuzzier liberal-conservative identification. Among other differences, it should not suffer from the "in comparison to what" problem as a Democrat is a Democrat and a Republican is a Republican. The problem of international cues, as discussed in Chapter 2, almost completely disappears as the two parties are quite solidly grounded in the institutions and politics of the United States, although this does not preclude international cues playing some role in the construction of the parties' agendas. Unlike liberal and conservative, there are formal methods of determining what the two parties stand for, although both continue to produce platforms that tend to be phoenix-like in nature[42]. Consequently, one should expect greater consistency when it comes to respondent policy preferences being in line with the larger identity. Also, unlike the liberal-conservative identification, it is significantly easier to identify both the in- and out-groups in a partisan context than in an ideological one. Bumper stickers, yard signs, billboards, mass media ads, and so forth all give clear cues as to who is "us" and who is "them" (or at least "not us"), perhaps more so in campaigns which are more candidate-centered, and the news media is very good about associating newsworthy people and events with the appropriate party on a daily, and often hourly basis.

Consider, for example, the recent Senate confirmation hearings on the nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to fill the seat of retiring Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kenney. In an *Economist*/YouGov poll of 1,500 US adults conducted between September 30 and October 2,

[42] Every four years they rise from the ashes of the previous platform, blaze brilliantly, and then substantively, rhetorically, and symbolically fade into obscurity until the next national convention.

2018 (*The Economist*/YouGov 2018b), 74% of self-identified Democrat respondents[43] had an unfavorable ("somewhat" or "very") opinion of Kavanaugh while 70% of self-identified Republican respondents had a favorable ("somewhat" or "very") opinion of him[44]. As a baseline for comparison, in *Economist*/YouGov (2018a) data for July 15-17 (Kavanaugh's nomination was announced on July 10), 50% of Democrats had an unfavorable opinion of him (22% "somewhat" and 28% "very") with 35% unsure, while 64% of Republicans had a favorable opinion of him (26% "somewhat" and 38% "very") with 27% unsure. These results were based on a sample of 1500 US adults in which 22% of Democrats and 16% of Republicans had heard "nothing at all" about him, 36% of Democrats and 43% of Republicans had heard "a little," while 42% of Democrats and 41% of Republicans had heard "a lot" about him. Favorability among Independents was split with 29% favorable (13% "somewhat" and 16% "very"), 22% unfavorable (9% "somewhat" and 13% "very"), and 49% unsure, with 38% having heard "a lot" about him, 31% heard "a little," and 32% having heard "nothing at all." Regarding the allegations of sexual misconduct which became one of the major points of the confirmation hearings, 74% of self-identified Democrat respondents believed Kavanaugh was not being truthful (either "probably" or "definitely") about the alleged misbehavior, while 76% of self-identified Republican respondents believed he was being truthful (about 15% of both groups were not sure). 80% of Democrat respondents believed Kavanaugh should not be confirmed, 77% of Republican respondents thought he should, and Independent respondents were approximately evenly divided/unsure[45]. Under the assumption of partisanship as identity, the simpler and more likely explanation encompassing the larger share of the variation in those preferences is that Kavanaugh represented the "out-group" among Democrats and "in-group" among Republicans.

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[43] About 35% of respondents self-identified as Democrat, about 41% as Independent, and about 24% as Republican. YouGov does not detail how "leaners" are classified, but other *Economist*/YouGov survey results appear to allow respondents to "lean" toward one party or the other but to ultimately leave them classified as Independents.

[44] Independents were split with 38% unfavorable, 28% favorable, and 35% unsure.

[45] 29% favored confirmation, 33% opposed it, and 37% were unsure.

Presidential approval is also telling in this regard. For November 14-16, 2018[46], and still using data from the *Economist*/YouGov respondent panel, President Trump's overall approval ratings were within his historically normal range with 44% approving and 54% disapproving[47]. Among Republican identifiers his approval was at 88% (67% "strongly" and 27% "somewhat") and 1% "not sure," while his disapproval rating among Democrats was almost the mirror opposite with 88% disapproving (79% "strongly" and 9% "somewhat") and 2% "not sure." Independents were more evenly divided with 35% approving (either "strongly" or "somewhat"), 50% disapproving, and 15% "not sure." By comparison, President Obama's approval/disapproval ratings were generally more favorable than Trump's, especially in the early part of his first administration, but overall showed much the same divergence when examined by respondent partisan identification (Democrat identifiers tended to be more approving and Republican identifiers tended to be more disapproving[48]).

Given the vast disparity in the numbers, the major question is whether such an effect can be explained in terms of something other than partisan attitudes and affiliations. All respondents have access to the same information on economic performance, markets, foreign affairs, and the rest, so any significant variation should be explainable through the perception of that information. The question of whether responsibility for events is consistently attributed is one which requires further attention. As proposed by Sirin and Villalobos (2011), internal/external attribution is driven predominantly by partisan identification. Thus, it seems likely that when information perceived as positive is received, in-group members would tend to attribute it to factors internal to "our team" while out-group members would tend to attribute it to factors external to "their team." For example, while declining unemployment rates might be internally attributed to the incumbent president's economic policies by that party's supporters, opponents

[46] Chosen because it was the most recent data rather than due to any significant events.
[47] Gallup's data for the same timeframe was 43% approve and 53% disapprove.
[48] Jacobson's (2016) Gallup data shows Obama's approval among Republicans dropping from close to 40% at the time of his inauguration in 2009 to about 10% by late 2010. It stayed around 10% for the remainder of his time in office. Approval among Democrats remained between 80% and 90% for both terms.

of the president's party might externally emphasize the enduring effects of the previous president's economic policies or other factors outside the incumbent president's control. The overall tendency should therefore be that positive information is attributable to the respondent's favored side, while negative information is attributable to the respondent's disfavored side. While understandable, this leads back to the issue pertaining to the framing and presentation of the questions from which the approval data is generated.

Using *Economist*/YouGov data for November 11-13, 2018 (N=1,500 US adults) (*The Economist*/YouGov 2018c), "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling these specific issues?" strongly suggests that whatever the status quo might be or might be expected to be, Trump bears some degree of responsibility for it. Although there is not public access to the actual questionnaire presented to panel respondents, YouGov's presentation on these types of questions is commonly the broader question followed by the specific issue areas, similar to Figure 3-1 below. On political issue opinions, the response set does not generally allow for responses other than strength of approval/disapproval and "not sure," although it is also possible to leave a response blank or to skip the question entirely, more or less equivalent to a "NA" response in other surveys. I do note that YouGov surveys are heavily internet-based, which raises issues of selection bias in their sampling methodology. I find no indication that the resulting data are weighted, but it is possible that the panel itself is weighted prior to the collection of the data, which should have a similar effect. Regardless of whether one approves or disapproves of the president and his behaviors, issue domains such as budget deficits require the cooperation of other actors to occur and "the economy" is an amalgamation of multiple actors, both domestic and international, so the assumption of sole attribution to the president becomes problematic, lending more credence to the idea of political attitudes being shaped by perceptions of the object's group membership.

Figure 3.1: Sample Economist/YouGov Approval Question (not real)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling these issues?					
	Strongly approve	Somewhat approve	Somewhat disapprove	Strongly disapprove	Not sure
Abortion	O	O	O	O	O
Budget deficit	O	O	O	O	O
Civil rights	O	O	O	O	O
Economy	O	O	O	O	O

As an aside and on the specific issue of budget deficits, Dick Cheney is often noted for his comment that "deficits don't matter" (Suskind 2004), although the full comment was that "Reagan proved that deficits don't matter" and it was made in the context of a tax cut proposal. But a more descriptive rendition of that might be, "deficits don't matter as long as it's our guy in the White House." Tesler (2013) found that Republicans were less likely to see deficits as an important problem while Bush was president, but strikingly more likely to see them as an important problem while Obama was president, with the reverse being the case for Democrats. An important question is the degree to which education and information affect attribution in very broad issue domains which require the coordinated efforts of multiple actors who do not share a partisan affiliation. Are more educated or more informed respondents more likely to be less judgmental by not giving sole attribution for economic changes to the incumbent president while respondents with less education/information might tend to be more accepting of claims of sole credit or blame? This question cannot be explored with my current data, so other effects must be relegated to other research.

The simplicity of the partisan identity framework and its in/out-group effects belies several important considerations. In no particular order of importance, they are how survey data treats self-identifying Independents, the conception of partisanship in survey construction, the assumption of the stability of party identification over time, presidential vote as indicative of issue preferences, party identification as indicative of issue preferences, and the nature of the electorate in drawing conclusions about levels of polarization.

3.1 THE TREATMENT OF INDEPENDENTS AND "LEANERS"

Political opinion surveys almost always ask about party identification in the normal course of assessing the respondents' opinions on various political issues, often with the net result that the quality of the data stems primarily from the representativeness of the sample and the modality through which the data is collected because "do you consider yourself to be a Democrat, a Republican, Independent, or something else?" is a canonical and expected question. The ANES surveys have included a party identification question in all administrations since 1952. For ANES, the question is typically presented as a two-part item with party identification in one part and strength of identification (strong/weak) in the second. In the two-part presentation, respondents who initially give Independent, no party preference, "don't know," "other" or similar responses, are asked whether they are closer to the Democrats or the Republicans. The meaning of "closer to" is left to the respondent, but those who respond to the second part with a party preference are categorized as "leaners." Other surveys commonly adopt a 7-point scale and the respondent may select points 3 or 5, which are typically labeled as something like "Independent–Democrat/Republican" or "Independent–lean Democrat/Republican," while "Lean Democrat/Republican" (with no indication of Independent) is also used. The problem with both forms of presentation is not so much with the "strong" and "weak" party identifiers, as these respondents clearly identify with one party or the other, but with the treatment of the "leaners" in the subsequent data analysis.

The classification of these leaning independents involves several assumptions and the first is a pragmatic one. The reality of American national election outcomes is that candidates who are not identified with one of the two major parties will be very rarely be elected[49], so voters are assumed to have preferences which align with one of the major parties. Thus, the implied

[49] Of the current voting members of the House of Representatives, all associate with one of the two major parties. Of the 100 members of the Senate, two are not officially associated with one of the major parties, but both caucus with the Democrats. Considering his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination in the 2016 primary, I leave the question of whether Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders is an Independent or a Democrat to the reader. A few third-party Representatives and Senators have been elected during the country's history, but they are a tiny fraction in comparison to the number who officially identify with one of the major parties.

framing of the question for respondents classified as "leaning" is "since you must ultimately choose one of the two parties, which do you prefer?" On the other hand, accepting Independents as not wishing to associate with either party leads to an implicit framing of "we accept that you do not want to identify with a party, but do you think you are more like the Democrats or Republicans?" In other words, a respondent who does not profess identity with one party or the other is assumed to have an identification with one unless they specifically reject both, often after being asked multiple times (as in ANES' presentation). From the survey construction perspective, this might be done with good reason. In the ANES party identification responses since 1968[50], about 1% of respondents identify as "other" while about 6.4% express "no preference" or favor "neither," but this is conceivably an artifact of the question framing and presentation. The literature on this and similar issues is mixed. The current idea of party leaners being "closet partisans" who, in most respects aside from party identification behave as partisans has its foundation in Keith, et al. (1986 and 1992), who based their findings on Presidential, Senate, and House vote choices. The reasoning behind this approach seems sound enough: Democrats vote for Democratic candidates, Republicans vote for Republican candidates. Thus, if a "leaner" votes for a candidate in the direction of their leaning, they are behaving as a partisan. In part, the Keith group's argument is flawed because of their use of voting behavior in House elections and their data was collected at a time when some regions of the country lacked an effective opposition party. But even bringing the data forward in time by looking at House elections in 2016 and 2018, the assumption of partisanship may be questionable due to the lopsided character of many House elections.

The dataset for the 2016 House elections was compiled in 2017 and the dataset for 2018 was compiled shortly after the general election. I coded contests as "unopposed" for candidates who faced no opponent, a write-in/3rd party candidate, or an opponent within their own party.

[50] Although party identification has been asked about since 1952, the difficulty of separating the respondents who identify as other than Democrat, Republican, or Independent in the pre-1968 data makes it simpler to ignore the earlier administrations. From 1968 through 2016, less than 400 ANES respondents either were not asked or refused to identify with a party or identify themselves as Independent.

California has open primaries and the general election is between the best two winners of the primary election, so while some general election contests were closely fought, they were between candidates from the same party and I counted it as 100% of the vote for that party. Louisiana does not hold primaries, so general election contests are often between multiple candidates and plurality winners are not uncommon. The margin of victory was calculated as the difference between the winner and their next closest competitor, regardless of party. Contested elections were then divided into contests where the winner garnered more than 60% of the vote (the generally used cutoff for a "landslide" victory and perhaps an indicator of token opposition), 56% to 60% of the vote (margin of victory between 11% and 20%) counted as a "comfortable" margin, and 55% or less (10% or less margin of victory) as "close," although a 10% margin of victory in a two-candidate contest may be a somewhat loose conception of "close." In the 2016 House elections, 254 seats (58.4%) were won by margins in excess of 20%, not including the 62 uncontested seats (14.3%); 35 contests (8%) were "close;" and 84 seats (19.3%) were won by comfortable margins. For 2018, 41 seats (9.4%) were uncontested, 230 seats (52.9%) were won by landslide or better margins, 73 seats (16.8%) were won by comfortable margins, and 91 contests (20.9%) were close, including 48 where the margin of victory was 5% or less. The exceptionally large number of contests where the winner polled at landslide or better margins may be an indicator that there is almost no effective opposition in those districts and a leaning partisan vote in these districts does not say much about their leanings, either for or against. Without correcting for the usual inflation of self-reported voting, less than half of leaning Democrats report voting for the Democratic candidate[51] between 1952 and 2016 (47.1% on average), although many more reported not voting (41.3% on average) than reported voting for the Republican candidate (11.6% on average). By the same token, leaning Republicans reported voting for the Republican candidate more often than leaning Democrats (57.5% on average), and reported not voting (33.8% on average) more often than voting for the Democratic candidate

[51] Because of its inconsistent appearance in the data, self-reported voting for third-party candidates (Wallace, Anderson, Perot, etc.) was excluded from the totals for each year.

(8.7% on average). While a third-party vote is clearly a vote for "neither" when it comes to the major parties, the interesting question, and I have no data with which to explore it, is how many of the abstainers chose not to vote as a protest to the major party's candidate. Until Zaller's (2012, 612) concern ("the key problem in this area [is] what people mean by their survey responses") can be resolved, the true status of leaning partisans will likely remain a contested area of scholarship.

Figures 3.2 and 3.3 below show the resulting distribution of party identification when leaners are treated as partisans and when they are treated as Independents. If, as in Figure 3.2, "leaners" are grouped with partisans, the divisions among the electorate are accentuated because "pure" Independents (those who specifically refuse to identify with either party across both questions) constitute a small slice of the whole (11.3% on average), lending some credence to the polarization narrative as the contest between the parties becomes one of which party can muster the largest number of their supporters on election day. This makes election victory a function of the relative proportions of Democrats and Republicans in that portion of the electorate which turns out at election time. It also demonstrates the resulting problem when the public is, as in Fiorina's conception, closely but not deeply divided. While Wlezien's (1995) thermostat analogy is a useful way of looking at preferences in relation to election outcomes, thermostats are not generally thought of as on/off switches. Instead, they function as a preset where if the temperature moves inside or outside of certain bounds, the currently selected device (the heater or the air conditioner) turns on or off. Fiorina's (2017) portrayal of electoral majorities as being unstable, however, lends itself more to being analogous to a seesaw where small shifts among some segments of the population can quickly tilt in one direction or the other.

Figure 3.2: Respondent Party Identification Percentages by Year (Leaners Included with Partisans and excluding DK/Ref/NA/Missing)

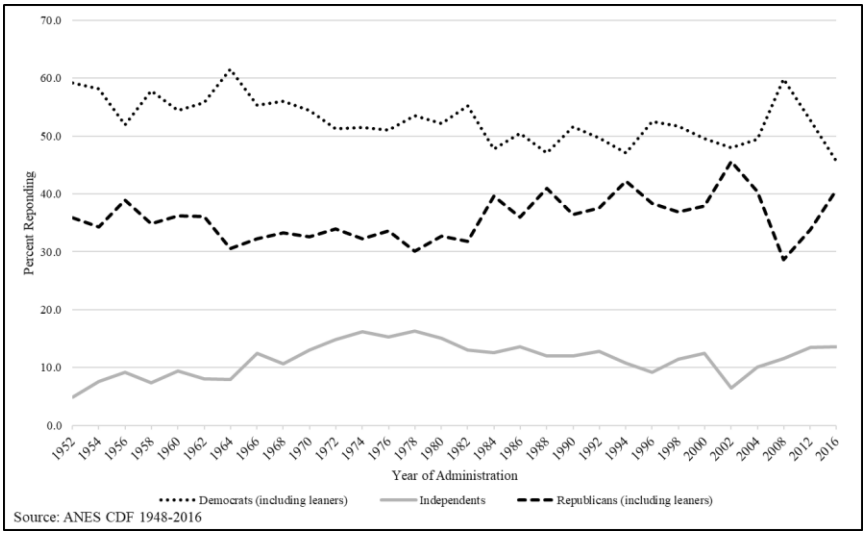

Figure 3.3: Respondent Party Identification Percentages by Year (Leaners Included with Independents and excluding DK/Ref/NA/Missing)

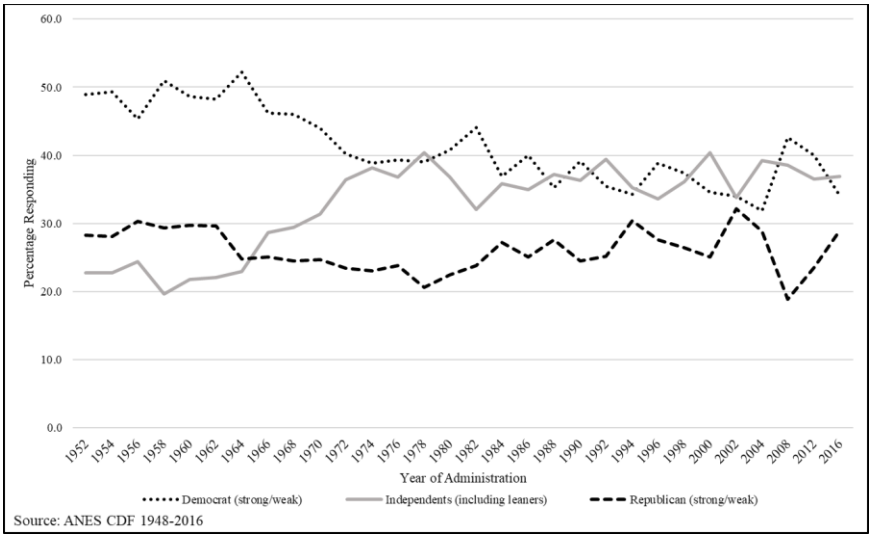

Figure 3.3, on the other hand, accepts the leaners' initial claims of independence or no preference at face value and shows a more balanced distribution where Independents account for approximately a third of the electorate (33.9% on average). This is also in line with the presentation of the question of party identity in other surveys, such as some exit polls, where respondents may only choose between Democrat, Republican, and Independent without a

"leaning" option. In this scenario, the conflict between the parties becomes one of either gaining the support of the uncommitted or at least not antagonizing them to the point where they will vote for the other party, much in keeping with the traditional median voter theorem discussed in Chapter 1.

3.2 THE STABILITY OF PARTISAN IDENTITY

Since Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes' *The American Voter* (1961), party identification has been assumed to be stable over time. MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson (1989, 1126) noted that less than 4% of respondents in panel studies switched party identification (Democrat to Republican or vice versa) over a four-year period, with somewhat larger numbers moving into and out of the Independent classification. In fact, party identification was assumed to be so persistent that some analysists (e.g. Achen 1975) attributed it to measurement error[52] rather than actual switching, and party identification has at times been treated as the ultimate independent variable[53]. Commenting on the persistence of party identification, Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (2002, 3) noted that "sex, religion, and class were weaker predictors of the vote for Ronald Reagan [in 1980] than was party identification measured during the Johnson administration."[54] A critical question to be addressed in this area, however, is "in virtue of what is someone a Democrat or Republican?" Green, et al. (2002) are somewhat at odds with attempts to answer this question through a rationality framework (e.g., Downs 1957, Key 1966, and their progeny) or an ideological one (Abramowitz and Saunders 2006) in that they propose partisanship to be more a function of social identity[55] than of rational evaluations of performance in office, support for party platforms, or ideological leanings.

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[52] Achen's major thesis on this point was that the researcher cannot control for the salience or uncertain meaning of survey questions to the respondent ("fuzziness" (p. 1225)) and cannot control for exogenous informational shocks which might exert some change upon the respondent at different points in time. See RePass (1971) for similar conclusions regarding issue salience.

[53] Achen and Bartels (2006, 34, quoted in Zaller 2012, 583) refer to it as the "gold standard" of attitudinal stability.

[54] Green, et al. (2002) based their observation on panel data obtained from the Youth-Parent Socialization Study (Jennings, Markus, Niemi, and Stoker 2005); the initial wave of the panel study was done in 1965 and the final wave in 1997.

[55] See also DiMaggio, Evans, and Bryson's (1996) explanation of their assumptions.

The larger question of "what is identity?" will have to be assigned to future study except to the extent that statements such as "I am a(n) _____" or "She/He is a(n) _____" can be taken here as indicators of one or more types of identity and that identities can be either ascribed or acquired. Ascribed identity requires no action on the part of the holder and includes characteristics such as gender, race, ethnicity, and so forth. Acquired identities require action, either physical or cognitive, on the part of the holder. One may be female by virtue of ascribed identity, for example, but feminist or not by virtue of acquired identity. But is partisan identity ascribed or acquired? Niemi and Jennings (1991) propose that it is a function of family background such that people raised in Democrat households generally tend to identify as Democrats, while people raised in Republican households generally tend to identify as Republicans. Accepting this as being the case in some or even most cases, does conformance with the expected attitudes and behaviors associated with that identity indicate real agreement with those attitudes or are they merely rote behavior?

Consider, for example, African-American respondents to the ANES surveys. Across all administrations, about 80% who expressed a partisan identification identified with the Democratic Party (strong, weak, or leaning) with African American females being notably more partisan in their attitudes and behaviors. This drops to 68% if leaners are counted as Independents but is still a very strong effect. This tendency to identify with the Democrats seems to have begun during the New Deal era and accelerated during the Civil Rights movement with that identification being higher in more recent years (88% in 2008 and 2012, and 84% in 2016)[56], but I note that it does not have similar correspondence with liberal-conservative leanings. In 2008, about 21% of African-Americans identifying as strong Democrats also identified as being any shade of liberal. This rose to 34% in 2012 and dropped back to 25% in 2016 (the percentages are lower and less consistent with weak and leaning identifiers). This would seem to indicate that in this case the partisan identity behaves more like an ascribed identity, in keeping with Niemi

[56] I do not explore the relationship between the change in African-American party identification in 2016 and the candidacy of Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012 but would accept this explanation as being reasonable.

and Jennings (1991), rather than one acquired through other means. This leads to questions about the nature of parties, partisanship, and partisan identity which require some sort of answer before partisanship as identity can be more fully addressed.

3.3 PARTIES AND PARTISANSHIP

Although there are many conceptions of political parties, Sartori's (1976, 64) minimal definition requires the fewest moving parts: "any political group that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections, candidates for public office;" wherein only a group and the ability to field a candidate are required. Its candidate-centered approach might seem rather limiting, but the choice presented to voters at an election, especially in the United States, is between candidates, so anything more than these two requirements goes to the likelihood of being able to win an election or reasons why a candidate should be elected rather than to the nature of the parties themselves. It is perhaps for this reason that the standard indicator of partisanship is not so much what the respondent believes in the realm of issues and ideology, but for whom they vote. To this extent, a party's primary goal becomes the election of a candidate and its primary function becomes the employment of the most effective means of accomplishing that.

It is a vast oversimplification of Converse (1964) to claim that he believed the electorate to be largely ideologically unconstrained, uninformed, and politically unsophisticated. It would be more accurate interpretation to describe his conception of the electorate as one of it being composed of individuals of differing interests, circumstances, outlooks, and levels of information who are regularly called upon to select officials to represent them in making decisions which will affect those interests and circumstances, and doing so within the constraints of low levels of information, a general lack of consistent internal direction (ideological constraint), and prospective uncertainty regarding the candidates from whom they must select. Political parties act to encourage the selection of their candidate by trying to rectify those shortcomings in a manner which is favorable to their candidates.

Unlike the more abstract liberal and conservative dimensions, which tend more toward an "in an ideal world" approach, political parties purport to represent concrete agendas with an eye toward increasing the voters' levels of information in a manner which reduces prospective uncertainty by advertising how their candidate will advance the voters' interests and circumstances. But because of voters' differing and sometimes competing interests (and levels of interest), an agenda which appeals to all voters is impossible, so parties must choose their positions with an eye toward how that position will improve the chances of their candidates' elections. Consider, by way of example, the 2016 Democratic plank of free college education[57], which was added following Senator Bernie Sanders' primary campaign. Perhaps awakening to the notion that blue-collar workers were a significantly larger share of its base than the college-educated, the Democrats' 2018 campaign rhetoric, if it spoke of college education at all, was centered more around "affordable" than "free."

In some respects, political parties behave like aggressive salespeople: "you may not think that you need this, but trust me, you really need this." Thus, it becomes one of the functions of a party to show that not only do an avocado grower, a diesel mechanic, and a hedge fund manager have interests which align, but also that helping one will help, or at least not hurt, the others. It is this situation which makes the "big tents" analogy a reasonably appropriate description of political parties and it is why disparate groups such as Big and Small Business interests, Pro-Life activists, and Agricultural interests can coexist within one of those tents: their practical and issue interests do not overlap much. By appealing to each, the party hopes to gain the support of all, while the potential support for the larger party agenda increases and with it the chance of a favorable election outcome. Considering the variety of interests that are represented within the Democratic and Republican tents, it is hardly surprising that the wider electorate might choose to identify with one of the major parties but have little interest in its agenda aside from a bare handful of issues in which they might be interested. Zaller (2012) noted that most voters do have

[57] The plank was applicable to "working-class families" and limited to public colleges, universities, and community colleges.

real policy preferences, but also that surveys do not often ask about them, focusing instead on issues which the survey architects perceive to be of interest. Thus, the expectation would be to find little consistency between party identification and issue preference responses and the surprising finding would be if any significant consistency were found.

Converse's offense at a request that he address the question "How Dumb Are the Voters Really?" (Converse 2000, 331) is quite understandable as voters are far from dumb. At worst, they are simply inattentive and ill- or misinformed and/or narrowly focused on a few issues to the exclusion of others. As I have argued elsewhere, when a voter steps into the voting booth, they know what they know, and they believe what they believe. That this may not rise to even a minimal level of epistemological rigor is irrelevant because they will vote based upon the information they have or think they have, and scholars, candidates, and parties cannot force them to have anything more than that. All that can be done is to accept that the electoral system should work to produce beneficial outcomes over the long term. If Arrow's Impossibility Theorem (Arrow 1963) is correct, no electoral system can produce consistently fair and acceptable outcomes. What they produce, all else being equal, is the best that can be expected under the prevailing conditions.

3.4 PARTISANSHIP AND PARTISAN ANIMOSITY

The existence and strength of the animosity between partisan identifiers remains to be explored. Before delving into this question, the question of the effects of extreme candidate agendas has been alluded to, but not addressed. Absent more in-depth access to data with which to work, I must rely on Cohen, et al.'s (2016) conclusion that with respect to presidential elections, there is no significant electoral penalty for a candidate taking an extreme position and no significant electoral reward for taking a moderate one. What seems to matter more as far as the voters are concerned is the interaction of the economy (Real Disposable Income [RDI] as measured in the 14th and 15th quarters of the president's second term) and the length of time the president's party has been in office (see Zaller 2012, 615, but see Wlezien 1995 for a similar

effect). There remains much room for elite rhetoric and structural effects to play their role in this conception, however. RDI had been increasing steadily throughout both of Obama's terms and rose at approximately an annualized 2% rate during Q2 and Q3 of 2016 (St. Louis Federal Reserve data). By this conception, Hillary Clinton should have won the 2016 presidential election. That she did not is indicative that the more parsimonious explainer may not necessarily be the better predictor. It worked as an indicator of the popular vote but failed to account for the institutional effects of the Electoral College.

Returning to the conception of in/out-group identity, there are three available group feeling thermometer indicators which go to partisan group perceptions: Democrats/Republicans, Democratic Party/Republican Party, and Liberals/Conservatives. Interestly, 1980 is the single ANES administration in which all three groups of feeling thermometer question were presented, and this allows the exploration of an interesting question: to what extent do respondents see these groups seen as being similar things? I exclude all DK/Ref/NA responses from all six thermometers, resulting in N=1,185 for the Democrat/Liberal side and N=1,213 for the Republican/Conservative side. The correlations between Democrat and Democratic Party (0.63) and between Republican and Republican Party (0.56) are the strongest, with the correlations between Democrat and Liberal (0.42) and Democratic Party and Liberal (0.39) being much weaker. This may be partially explainable in terms of the incumbent president (Jimmy Carter) having faced a strong primary challenger from within his own party (Senator Ted Kennedy) who painted him as being too conservative[58], so Democrats and the Democratic Party might have been caught in the overspray. Interestingly, and aside from Lyndon Johnson's early decision to withdraw in 1968, this was probably the most contentious challenge to an incumbent president from within his own party since 1912. John Anderson's third-party candidacy[59] seems likely to

[58] By Cohen, et al.'s (2016) analysis, Carter in 1980 was the least liberal Democratic candidate of the postwar period, although he was clearly a moderate rather than a conservative. This may also have contributed to Reagan's ability to successfully campaign as strong conservative, but Carter's reelection bid was also accompanied by lingering economic problems and the Iran hostage crisis, so there were other factors affecting perceptions.
[59] Anderson dropped out of the Republican Party primary contests and ran as a moderate alternative to Reagan.

have had a greater impact on Reagan's campaign than on Carter's. The correlation between Republicans and Conservative (0.50) is stronger than that between Democrats and Liberals, again possibly due to effects within the Democratic Party. However, the correlation between Republican Party and Conservative (0.35) is close to that of Democratic Party and Liberal. Cronbach's Alpha is 0.73 for the Democratic side and 0.71 for the Republican side, so all components are consistently covarying for each side. Tables 3-1 and 3-2 below show the marginal effects of the thermometers on each other.

Table 3.1: Effects of Democrat/Liberal Feeling Thermometers (1980, N=1,185)

DV	Democrats	Democratic Party	Liberals	SE	R^2
Democrats	--	0.47***	0.20***	0.02	0.44
Democratic Party	0.66***	--	0.16***	0.02	0.41
Liberals	0.33***	0.18***	--	0.03	0.21
Source: ANES CDF, 1948-2016					

Table 3.2: Effects of Republican/Conservative Feeling Thermometers (1980, N=1,213)

DV	**Republicans**	**Republican Party**	**Conservatives**	**SE**	**R^2**
Republicans	--	0.39***	0.34***	0.02	0.43
Republican Party	0.62***	--	0.09***	0.03	0.33
Conservatives	0.46***	0.07***	--	0.03	0.26
Source: ANES CDF, 1948-2016					

These results suggest that Democrat/Democratic Party and Republican/Republican Party are distinguishable but mostly interchangable in the respondents' minds, while Liberals and Conservatives are conceived of as being quite different from the parties and their supporters. It also is quite clear that while respondents strongly associate Republicans with the Republican Party, the connection in respondents' minds between either of them and Conservatives is tenuous at best. I propose this with the caution that this analysis reflects a single year and that year is

about a full decade prior to the realignment of the South, so parties and their elites were still largely heterogeneous. The absence of one or more of the indicators in other ANES administration years do not provide the opportunity to conduct a more substantial analysis, but a different dataset with similar indicators for other years would provide much greater traction in approaching the question.

Partisan rhetoric has often tended toward the acrimonious. It is very difficult for a candidate to propose why they would be a better choice without also stating or at least implying that their opponent would be a worse one. As Hetherington (2009) and Layman, Carsey, and Menasce Horowitz (2006) have shown, divergence between the parties has been the norm throughout most of the country's history, although normally confined to a handful of issues, while the seemingly unpolarized politics of the two or three postwar decades has been mostly due to the ideological heterogeneity of the two parties. But this heterogeneity means that the parties and their elites hold outlooks and issue positions that, as discussed, most of the electorate is either uninformed on and/or unaware of their importance (often due to low salience). The realignment of the parties (sorting) means that the party elites now hold more uniform outlooks and positions, but the level of information in the electorate seems to remain low (in 2016, about 25% of ANES respondents were still unable to identify the Republican Party as the more conservative party) and the voters are either uninformed on those issues or do not find them important. In order for issue divergence to be the cause of any animosity, there must be some core set of issues about which the voters possess some degree of information (even if it is incorrect information) or about which they care deeply. Considering the problem of time-bounded issue questions and the lack of correlation between issues that the respondents see as most imporant, survey data on issue positions may be a weak indicator of partisan leanings and an even weaker one of individual preferences.

As using the ability to identify the Republican Party as the more conservative party at the national level acted as a control for the indicator of ideological tendencies in Chapter 2, there needs to be some indicator that can be used to demonstrate that partisan affiliation is based on

something more than whim or a coin flip. For all presidential election cycles except 1956, and including a handful of midterm cycles in the 1980s and 1990s, ANES has asked respondents whether there are important differences in what the Democrats and Republicans stand for[60], and respondents could respond with yes, no, or don't know. Responding with "no" or "don't know" raises an interesting question in that identifying with a major party while also asserting that there are no important differences between the parties implies that for these respondents the contest between the parties may be more like "Coke vs. Pepsi" than "us vs. them." While 2012 and 2016 had the lowest rate of respondents who saw no important differences between the parties (about 16%) and 2004/2008 were next-largest at about 25%, more than a third and sometimes more than half of respondents in earlier administrations have provided this same kind of response. "Pure" independents have tended to be the largest group of identifiers who do this in recent years, but Democrats and Republicans of all types (strong, weak, and leaning) do it in large proportions, as shown in Tables 3.3A and 3.3B below.

Table 3.3A. Percentage of Partisan Identifiers Seeing No Important Differences Between the Democratic and Republican Parties

Party ID	**1952**	**1960**	**1964**	**1966**	**1968**	**1972**	**1976**	**1980**	**1984**	**1986**	**1988**
Strong Democrat	8.4	2.7	1.2	7.3	5.8	5.6	4.8	4.9	4.4	5.6	5.1
Weak Democrat	14.4	8.1	9.7	19.9	14.6	15.1	12.2	11.1	6.4	12.3	8.3
Independent Democrat	5.0	13.0	13.5	6.4	4.9	5.0	6.3	5.4	4.1	5.3	4.6
Independent	3.1	2.7	4.0	9.9	6.6	9.4	11.6	9.8	7.8	11.1	8.2
Independent Republican	3.6	5.6	4.6	3.6	4.7	6.7	6.0	3.6	5.7	5.9	5.4
Weak Republican	8.3	3.4	2.0	10.4	7.5	8.2	8.5	5.4	6.6	8.6	5.5
Strong Republican	5.6	7.6	7.0	2.0	3.5	3.9	2.9	1.7	2.4	3.3	3.1
Total	48.4	43.1	42.0	59.5	47.5	53.8	52.2	42.0	37.5	52.2	40.3
Source: ANES CDF, 1948-2016											

[60] There are large number of respondents who were not presented with this question in 1972, 1984, 1986, 1990, and 1996 due to variations in the survey instruments used, so the sample size for these administrations is substantially reduced.

Table 3.3B. Percentage of Partisan Identifiers Seeing No Important Differences Between the Democratic and Republican Parties (1948-2016)

Party ID	**1990**	**1992**	**1994**	**1996**	**1998**	**2000**	**2004**	**2008**	**2012**	**2016**
Strong Democrat	6.8	4.3	5.9	3.9	4.3	5.0	2.1	3.7	2.2	1.5
Weak Democrat	11.2	6.6	11.3	8.3	8.3	5.3	4.9	4.3	2.8	2.3
Independent Democrat	7.1	6.3	7.1	7.0	5.8	6.1	5.0	4.8	2.4	2.0
Independent	10.3	8.2	7.9	5.1	8.8	6.5	4.2	6.1	5.4	5.0
Independent Republican	7.1	5.3	5.6	4.0	5.6	4.3	2.8	2.8	2.2	2.0
Weak Republican	9.2	6.2	7.5	4.4	6.2	4.1	2.0	1.8	1.9	1.8
Strong Republican	2.6	2.9	2.6	1.7	3.1	2.0	1.5	1.0	0.6	1.0
Total	54.4	39.8	47.9	34.6	42.0	33.3	22.4	24.5	17.5	15.5
Source: ANES CDF, 1948-2016										

Some (e.g., Abramowitz and Campbell) point to the decreasing numbers of respondents who see no important difference between the parties as indicative of growing polarization in the electorate, but it seems more indicative of growing levels of information, making it slightly (and only slightly) more difficult to identify with a party without understanding that it is different from the other party. As with many other survey items, Zaller's (2012) observation of the central problem of public opinion research is particularly appropriate to this question. When a respondent asserts that there are no important differences between the parties, do they mean there are no meaningful policy and agenda differences; that there are no behavioral differences such that they see both parties as perhaps being corrupt, driven by money, or uncommitted to the needs of the needs of their constituents; do they mean that both sides will engage in bailouts, or produce negative economic effects (government shutdowns or favoring corporate interests, for example); or do they mean something else?

But this does raise a question about how one can see no important differences between parties and give differing feeling thermometer responses for their members. On what basis could

a Democrat, for example, claim that there were no important differences between the two parties, yet give lower feeling thermometer ratings to the Republican Party than to the Democratic Party? The more likely explanation would be that even if there are no important differences between the two groups, one still represents an in-group and one represents an out-group. While the "no important differences" variable should produce smaller marginal effects on the feeling thermometers and may be more indicative of an "us vs. not-us" perspective than an "us vs. them" one, the in-group should still receive greater favor from the respondent.

To test this idea, I regress partisan identification against the feeling thermometers for both parties. This serves to exclude ANES administrations prior to 1980 as these questions were not presented, but I am more interested in the current effects of partisanship than the historical ones. I exclude all DK/Ref/NA responses from all variables. This is done more for coding reasons than from any belief that people who do not know where they stand on a particular question have no meaningful responses to other questions. This test is similar to the ideology vs. feeling thermometer test in Chapter 2, but requires three models. The first model tests all partisans against the Democratic Party and Republican Party feeling thermometers. The second model tests partisans who acknowledge important differences between the parties, while the third tests partisans who see no important differences between the parties. I expect that the exclusion of the "no important differences" partisans will produce signficantly stronger marginal effects from the rest, especially as the parties realign, while the exclusion of the "important differences" partisans will produce signficantly weaker effects. Because of the scaling of both the partisanship and feeling thermometers, one should expect to see negative effects when regressing against the Democratic Party and positive effects when regressing against the Repblican Party. The full regression results tables may be found in Appendix B, but an abbreviated version is below in Tables 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6.

Table 3.4: Effect of Partisanship on Party Feeling Thermometers (FT)

	Democrat FT		Republican FT	
Year	**ME**	**R^2**	**ME**	**R^2**
1980	-7.12	0.38	5.37	0.25
1984	-6.21	0.43	6.75	0.34
1986	-6.96	0.42	6.43	0.31
1988	-7.19	0.41	6.89	0.35
1990	-6.01	0.33	5.70	0.34
1992	-7.04	0.41	6.27	0.36
1994	-7.72	0.48	6.06	0.35
1996	-7.99	0.47	6.58	0.36
1998	-6.94	0.38	6.93	0.49
2000	-8.21	0.47	6.75	0.36
2004	-7.87	0.49	8.71	0.49
2008	-8.91	0.51	7.99	0.39
2012	-10.21	0.57	9.04	0.48
2016	-10.28	0.56	8.17	0.42
Source: ANES CDF, 1948-2016 All results are significant at $p<0.001$				

Table 3.5: Effect of Partisanship on Party Feeling Thermometers (FT) for "Important Differences" Respondents

	Democrat FT		Republican FT	
Year	**ME**	**R^2**	**ME**	**R^2**
1980	-7.60	0.45	5.98	0.31
1984	-7.62	0.50	7.55	0.43
1986	-8.22	0.57	7.73	0.45
1988	-7.85	0.49	7.52	0.43
1990	-6.55	0.43	6.95	0.36
1992	-7.57	0.50	6.99	0.39
1994	-8.66	0.61	7.50	0.52
1996	-8.52	0.55	7.25	0.45
1998	-7.73	0.48	7.64	0.43
2000	-8.61	0.55	7.15	0.43
2004	-8.06	0.52	9.22	0.55
2008	-9.36	0.57	8.45	0.46
2012	-10.41	0.61	9.38	0.53
2016	-10.60	0.60	8.44	0.47
Source: ANES CDF, 1948-2016 All results are significant at $p<0.001$				

Table 3.6: Effect of Partisanship on Party Feeling Thermometers (FT) for "No Important Differences" Respondents

	Democrat FT		Republican FT	
Year	**ME**	**R^2**	**ME**	**R^2**
1980	-6.00	0.25	4.03	0.13
1984	-5.86	0.31	4.71	0.18
1986	-5.26	0.26	3.99	0.15
1988	-5.59	0.25	5.42	0.21
1990	-5.32	0.26	3.51	0.11
1992	-5.84	0.26	4.53	0.15
1994	-5.83	0.28	3.48	0.11
1996	-6.39	0.25	5.03	0.20
1998	-5.34	0.21	5.19	0.19
2000	-6.88	0.29	5.50	0.19
2004	-6.34	0.32	6.18	0.23
2008	-6.60	0.24	5.41	0.15
2012	-8.64	0.30	6.01	0.17
2016	-6.99	0.21	5.41	0.14
Source: ANES CDF, 1948-2016 All results are significant at $p<0.001$				

A few things jump out from the results in Table 3.4. Most importantly, the strength of the effect of partisanship on both feeling thermometers is reasonably consistent and the marginal effects tend to increase over time, becoming noticably stronger in the 1990s and forward. This is much in line with the polarization narrative advanced by Abramowitz, Campbell, and others. The standard errors (see the regression tables in Appendix B) are all about a fourth of a "degree" or less, and the explanatory power of the model becomes stronger as the effects increase. That the Republican side of the model does not produce the same magnitude of effects as the Democratic side may be explainable in terms similar to the effect of the "Moderate" ideological label on attitudes toward "Conservatives" seen in Chapter 2 in that they generally held warmer feelings for the right than for the left. But the explanatory power of this model is several times better than the ideology-based model despite the similar approach of working from a simple identity label. Table 3.5 above shows a somewhat stronger relationship among partisans who saw important

differences between the parties, but it is interesting that the explanatory power on the Republican side seldom exceeds .5 in either Model 1 (Table 3.4) or Model 2 (Table 3.5), but it consistently does so on the Democratic side for Model 2.

The marginal effects for Model 3 (Table 3.6) are consistently lower than for either of the other models and its explanatory power, especially on the Republican side, is in line with that of the ideology model. What this Model illustrates more than anything else is a rough approximation of the extent to which partisan identity may be affecting perceptions of and attitudes toward in/out-groups without recourse to issue divergence, policy preferences, political activities, ideological effects, or the other explanatory variables put forward by both sides of the polarization narrative at various times. That a large portion of the variation in the feeling thermometers remains unexplained goes to the minimalist nature of the model. One of the problems with relying on R^2 as the measure of explanatory power is that it is subject to inflation as more regressors are added to the mix. In order to minimize this effect, I have only attempted to explain what seems to be the largest piece of the puzzle rather than trying to explain all of it.

Chapter 4: Discussion and Conclusion

You can't get the right answer until you ask the right question.
--unattributed; variation of a poster used in a public-school classroom

On March 30, 1981, Ronald Reagan survived an assassination attempt and, as he was being treated, joked with the attending doctors, "I hope you are all Republicans." If this were to happen today, would it be a humorous or serious question? Shortly after the 2016 election, a student teased a political science professor about his new media celebrity status after he appeared on some local news programs to provide commentary on the results of the 2016 election. His reply was that his appearance was because most of the other department professors did not want to talk about it, perhaps an indication that professional detachment can be difficult to maintain, even among professionals. Drexler (2018) reported patients entering therapy almost immediately after the 2016 election in order to deal with the feelings of distress and anxiety provoked by it. The *Journal of Clinical Psychology* dedicated an entire issue (May 2018) to the topic of how the politics of both patients and therapists should be handled in therapy sessions. The American Psychological Association's annual "Stress in America" (American Psychological Association 2017) reported that 63% of its respondents rated "the future of our nation" as a "somewhat" or "very" significant source of stress, surpassing the traditional leading stressors of work (62%) and money (61%), with "the current political climate" (57%) running a close fourth. The importance of politics as a stressor was higher among Democrats (73%) than among Republicans (56%) or Independents (59%), although whether those numbers would have held if Clinton had been elected is an unknown. But that it is reported *at all* as a significant source of stress raises questions that cannot be answered within the context of the issue or ideological divergence frameworks that have traditionally been used to discuss polarization.

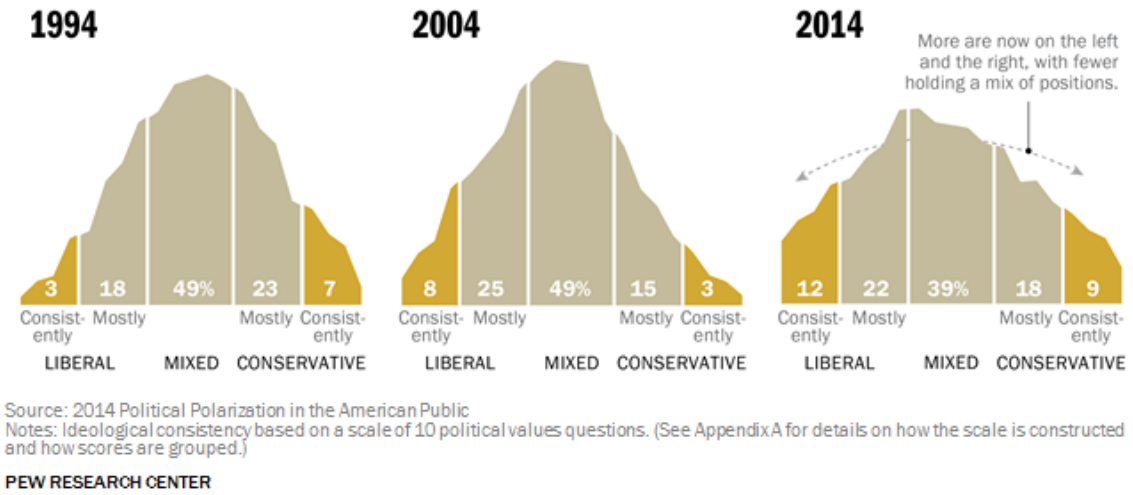
The examination of the wide variety of approaches, issues, and questions in the present work has not been to discredit or disparage any of the excellent work already done in the field of polarization research. If polarization means issue divergence, then my analysis comports with other analyses in that the largest section of the electorate (defined as eligible voters), exhibits mostly moderate preferences on unimportant issues and stronger preferences on those issues which they feel are important. This comports with Zaller (1992 and 2012) in the broader conception of most people responding to survey questions possessing a variety of often conflicting "considerations" on political issues, which can rise to the level of more consistent "attitudes" as their political awareness increases. More specifically in the context of polarization, this comports with both Abramowitz' and Fiorina's findings that polarization is mostly confined to the more aware and informed ends of ideological spectrum where more consistent preferences manifest as less tractable attitudes toward the positions of the other side. The inescapable conclusion is that the American electorate is indeed closely divided on a wide array of issues, but whether they are deeply divided depends largely on whether they are presented with more than two potential courses of action on any of them. In many respects, my initial task of trying to bridge Abramowitz and Fiorina is an impossible one. This is not so much because their approaches differ, but because they do not as both rely on the traditional ideology and issue divergence framework of polarization. Their main points of departure within this context are their conception of the electorate and the differences between polarization and sorting. Fiorina is correct that polarization in the sense of extreme issue divergence being mostly confined to the noisier ends of the ideological spectrum, a very small portion of the overall pool of citizens, and that the majority sit near the middle in something approximating a normal distribution of moderate preferences and opinions, thus being polarized only in the sense of having to choose

between increasingly divergent offerings. Abramowitz is correct in asserting that this moderate middle is generally uninformed, apathetic, and shrinking, so it is the more informed and politically active parts of the spectrum whose preferences count when examining electoral outcomes[61]. Additionally, it may be that it is these ends-of-the-spectrum people are the ones who are driving the divergence between the choices being offered to voters. On the whole, I find Fiorina's more inclusive conception of whose opinions count to be the more persuasive and appealing, but what both sides seem to miss, or at least cannot explain through the traditional approaches, is that there are two groups of people out there who do not seem to like each other very much and broader issue divergence is a poor indicator for explaining this dislike.

By Pew's (2014) reckoning, about 21% of the public sits on the "consistent" tails of the ideological distribution for the electorate, which is up from 10% in 1994 and 11% in 2004, while the "mixed" middle has dropped from 49% in 1994 and 2004 to 39% in 2014 (see Figure 4.1 below). Pew sidesteps the question of "what does liberal or conservative mean?" by using an additive index of agreement/disagreement with ten position statements. Respondents who provide a liberal response to a statement receive -1 point and those who provide a conservative response receive +1, resulting in a -10 to +10 scaling. "Consistent" respondents have scaled scores of negative or positive 7 to 10, "mostly" respondents have scaled scores between negative or positive 3 and 6, and "mixed" respondents have scaled scores between -2 and +2. This mixed middle remains a plurality of the electorate and Pew's data are approximately in line with other large-N national surveys on the ideological composition of the larger electorate.

[61] An unexpressed preference in this context being interpreted as equivalent to "no preference."

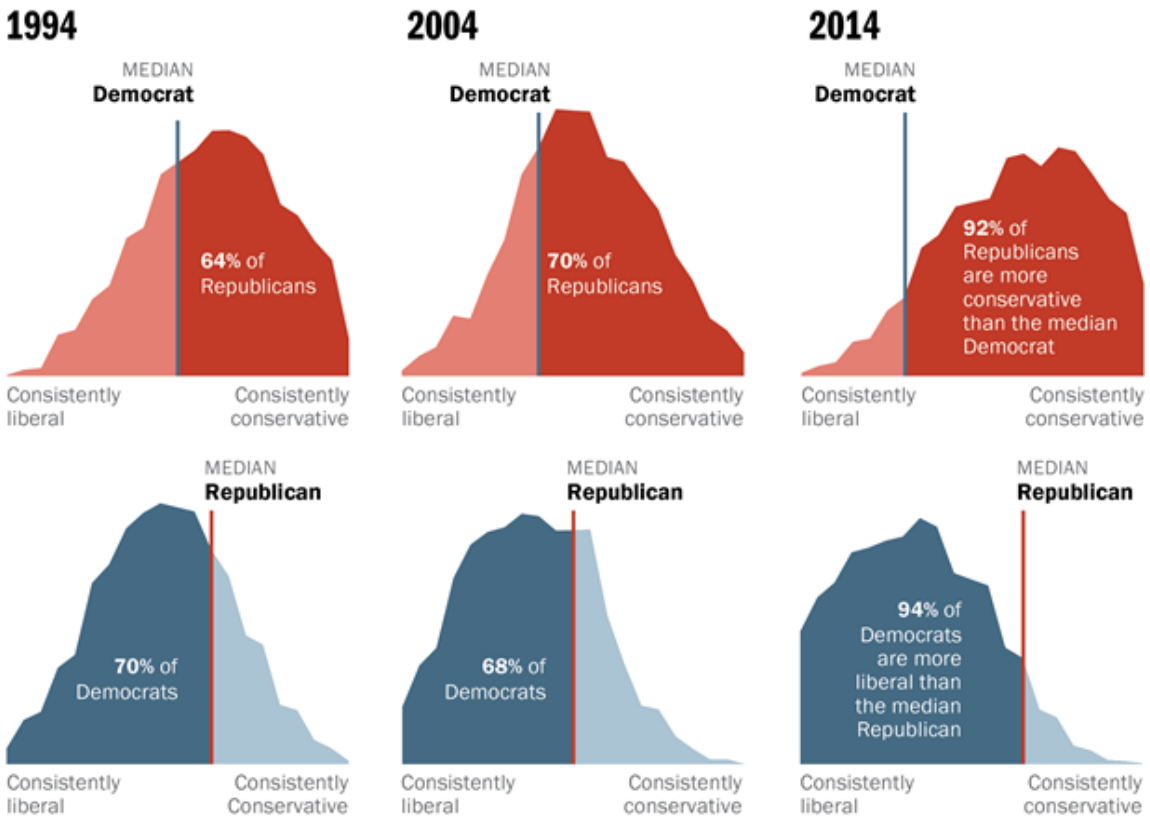
Figure 4.1: Ideological Consistency of the Electorate (percentages)



When the ideology scale is laid on top of partisan identification, Pew's (2014) data also support the assertion of the two parties becoming more ideologically homogeneous. As shown in Figure 4.2 below, in 1994 about 36% of Republicans[62] held ideological views which were more liberal than those of the median Democrat, and about 30% of Democrats held ideological views which were more conservative than the median Republican. By 2014, those percentages had shrunk to 6% of Democrats and 8% of Republicans.

[62] Pew also uses a 7-point scale of partisanship identification and includes self-identified "leaners" with partisans.

Figure 4.2: Distribution of Democrats and Republicans on a 10-item scale of political values



Source: 2014 Political Polarization in the American Public
Notes: Ideological consistency based on a scale of 10 political values questions (see Appendix A). Republicans include Republican-leaning independents; Democrats include Democratic-leaning independents (see Appendix B).

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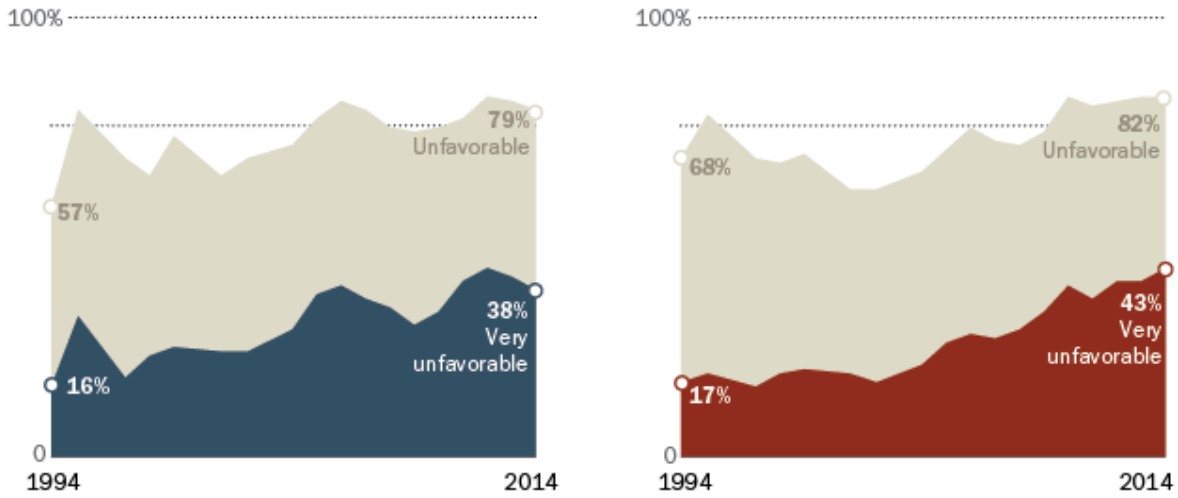
What is surprising and a cause for concern about this 2014 data is that 79% of Democrats have a “somewhat” (39%) or “very” (39%) unfavorable opinion of Republicans and Republicans return the sentiment with 82% having “somewhat” (39%) or “very” (42%) unfavorable opinions of Democrats (see Figure 4.3 below).

Figure 4.3: Democrat and Republican Favorability Ratings of the Opposing Party



Source: 2014 Political Polarization in the American Public
Notes: Republicans include Republican-leaning independents; Democrats include Democratic-leaning independents.

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This dislike has reached the point where 27% of all Democrat identifiers see Republicans as a threat to the nation's well-being[63], while 36% of Republican identifiers see Democrats as a threat to the nation's well-being, and I will not venture into President Trump's more recent comments regarding media outlets (and CNN in particular) as being enemies of the state. In support of Abramowitz' assertions regarding the interaction of ideology and political activity, these responses are highest among the "politically engaged"[64] (44% of engaged Democrats and 51% of engaged Republicans) and the most consistently ideological (50% of consistent liberals and 66% of consistent conservatives). Conversely, they are lowest among the least ideological (18% of mixed Democrats and 20% of mixed Republicans) and least engaged (18% of Democrats and 16% of Republicans). While these consistent liberals and conservatives only

[63] Operationalized as the percent of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with the statement that Republican/Democratic Party policies "are so misguided that they threaten the nation's well-being."
[64] Operationalized as a combination of (1) registered to vote, (2) follow government and public affairs at least "most of the time," and (3) report voting "always" or "nearly always."

comprise about a tenth of the electorate each, their respective ideologies cannot explain the larger disagreement and animosity which plays out on an almost daily basis in election campaigns, the news, and in real life, so the ideology-based explanation either needs to be revised or a differing explanation needs to be offered to address these effects.

Once an explanation has become the dominant framework, it is not required that the dominant framework's adherents continue to demonstrate its efficacy because this was done when it supplanted the previously dominant explanation. Instead, it is incumbent upon those who wish to challenge the dominant explanation to not only demonstrate its shortcomings, but to provide a replacement. Since I am unable to rationalize and explain the increasing amounts of dislike, animosity, and antagonism within the conventional framework of issue and ideological divergence, a different approach becomes necessary and to that end, I offer simple partisanship as its own social identity. I make no claims that this model is a complete one because it is not; it is only a starting point for one and it is one which requires different data than is collected in the usual large-N surveys.

I cannot, for example, use ANES or GSS data to explain the collapse of the norms of behavior among political elites. The US Senate, for example, used to be thought of as the greatest deliberative body in the world and George Washington once described it as the place where the hot issues of the House were sent to cool off. Consequently, senators have tended to act within institutional norms of coolness, comity, and decorum. Yet the levels of division within the Senate have reached, to a rough approximation, those of the House based on DW-NOMINATE data (Carroll, et al. 2015). Theriault and Rohde (2011) assert that almost all this shift can be attributed to a group of Senators who met three key criteria: (1) they are Republicans, (2) who previously served in the House, and (3) were first elected after 1978, the

year when Newt Gingrich was first elected to the House. However, Barber (2016) is also persuasive in showing that this is not confined to the Republican side of the aisle. Barber's analysis of voter preferences taken from the 2012 CCES survey (Ansolabehere and Schaffner 2005-2016), combined with an original 2013 survey of donors who reported donating more than $200 to a party or candidate[65] and DW-NOMINATE data showed that senators' preferences were more in line with those of the donors than with those of their constituents, which is very much in keeping with Bawn, et al.'s (2012) special-interest framework. These types of effects cannot be explored or explained strictly with large-N survey data.

Large-N survey data can allude to some affective behaviors in the mass publics, however. Based on Pew's (2014) data, for example, partisan Americans appear to be increasingly likely to express unhappiness at the thought of an immediate family member marrying someone of the opposite party. Concomitantly with that, they appear to be increasingly less likely to describe supporters of the opposing party in positive terms, such as "intelligent," and increasingly more likely to describe them in negative terms, such as "selfish" (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012). Pursuing a line of inquiry in this direction would add strength to the proposed model. Affective views of the other side should have two potential impacts regarding policy arguments. First, a positive perception of the opposing side should increase the perception of the validity of its argument and increase the uncertainty surrounding the supporting argument. Second, a negative perception of the opposing side should decrease the perception of the validity of its argument while decreasing the uncertainty surrounding the supporting argument. But when functional and effective democracy requires compromise, why seek compromise with someone whom you

[65] The pool of respondents was compiled from Federal Election Commission reports and divided into out-of-state donors and in-state donors who both did and did not contribute to the senator seeking reelection. The reported 14% response rate would have produced a sample of approximately N=2,100.

believe to be selfish and unintelligent? Anything beyond this sort of analysis requires a different kind of data arising out of a different theoretical framework than ideology and issues.

And in this context, what is the interaction between elite behavior and mass behavior? Are ordinary citizens less constrained in their affect toward members of the non-favored group and this behavior is adopted by the political elites as a means of showing that they share the attitudes and concerns of their constituents or for some other reason? Or are citizens adopting a "monkey see, monkey do" approach by mimicking the behaviors they observe among the political elites or other authority figures by assuming that this is now the norm of political behavior? It is undoubtedly at least a little bit of each, but which is the greater contributor? Regarding the "monkey see, monkey do" approach, the "see" part must necessarily be based in information coming from somewhere. Only a small fraction of the electorate attends campaign events and rallies to observe political elites firsthand, so they must be getting their information about elites' behavior from something other than personal observation. The last time the question was asked by ANES in 2008, only about 22% of respondents reported that they trusted the media to report events fairly "most of the time" or "almost all of the time." 42% believed events were reported fairly only "some of the time" and 31% believed they were "almost never" fairly reported, so on what basis do they trust that their perception of political elite behavior is accurate when it does not come from personal observation? Or perhaps this is an instance similar to respondents reporting low trust in Congress but liking their representative, so they report low trust in the media generally, but almost unquestioningly accept information from their preferred source(s). There is also the effect of people (not just in the political sphere) being more accepting of information which tends to confirm their existing biases and to be more skeptical of

disconfirming information. What is the root of those biases, how would one measure and account for their effects in survey data?

If an accurate and predictive model of these issues and effects could be constructed, then what? As stated earlier, people know what they know and believe what they believe. What rectifying measures could or should be implemented which would not seriously impinge on strenuously guarded civil rights? Could or should "infotainment" programming or even "hard" news programming be required to adhere to something like "truth in advertising" laws such that alternating labels of "fact," "opinion," "speculation," and the like be flashed to viewers with each piece of information? The idea of not deceiving the consumer is not without precedent and the behavior of the current administration may have increased the awareness of an entire post hoc fact-checking industry (e.g. factcheck.org, politifact.com, or snopes.com[66], among others). The 1983 made-for-TV film, "Special Bulletin," for example, was filmed in a live-stream news format and was required to include on-screen notices that it was a dramatization before and after each commercial break in order to let late-coming viewers know that it was not a live news program[67]. If such a policy were to be implemented, then *quis custodiet ipsos custodes* becomes a real concern. Even the Congressional Budget Office became a partisan target in the summer of 2017 when its projections of the impacts of the GOP's health plan were criticized by its supporters as biased. Could or should similar notices be required for anything purporting to be news analysis? Could or should political candidates, political activists, political action committees, and the like be held to a similar set of requirements? Even if it could be required, would it have any effect on public attitudes and perceptions?

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[66] All three significantly predate the current administration. Factcheck.org launched in 2003, Politifact launched in 2007, and Snopes has been available since 1994, although the primary focus of its earlier years had been the investigation of urban myths and legends.

[67] The purpose of the disclaimers was to avoid the public reaction which allegedly accompanied Orson Welles' 1939 "War of the Worlds" broadcast.

In the final analysis and despite the troubling implications of many of these behaviors and lingering questions, I do not recommend that anyone undergo psychotherapy simply on the basis of the current political climate being a source of stress[68]. While the current administration does appear to be plumbing the depths of belligerence and poor style with a notable lack of decorum and respect for the norms of presidential behavior, the 2016 election results were not significantly different from those of the 2000 election. In both cases, the plurality winner of the popular vote did not receive a majority of the electoral vote, demonstrating that small shifts in voting behavior can produce significantly different outcomes. George W. Bush gained 54 electoral votes from four states (Florida, Ohio, Nevada and New Hampshire) with only a plurality of the popular vote; Donald Trump gained 96 electoral votes from seven states (Utah, Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Arizona, Florida, and North Carolina) with only a plurality of the popular vote[69]. While the Electoral College system may have its detractors and critics, one of its benefits is that those small shifts in voting behavior are amplified to produce a clear winner, although whether this was by design or is an unintended side-effect is unknown. I believe that American institutions are more rugged and durable than many like to give them credit for being and they have weathered far worse than the current political storms. Even in the midst of a civil war, the United States conducted free and contested elections and the loser (George McClellan) accepted his loss. In 1940, Franklin Roosevelt broke with long-standing tradition to run for a third term[70]. That this tradition was later codified with the ratification of the 22nd Amendment only demonstrates that there are some norms which retain wide support. This is not to claim that institutions have not been and will not be further altered or eroded, but they are a far cry from being on the point of collapse. Assuming Justice Thurgood Marshall's assertion

[68] If you feel that you need the help, by all means seek it.

[69] The plurality result from Utah was the result of 3rd party candidate, Evan McMullin capturing 21.5% of the popular vote from the Republican candidate. Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton received about 27% of the popular vote, so Utah should be viewed as a "battleground" state only within the context the Republican Party.

[70] U.S. Grant sought a third non-consecutive term in 1880, but James Garfield won the Republican Party's nomination; Theodore Roosevelt attempted an unsuccessful 3rd-party run in 1912, though this would have technically been a second full term had he won.

that the Constitution is a "living document" is correct, then change and adaptation are in their nature. And, as Key (1966) very astutely observed, "voters are not fools." When they are sufficiently tired of the shenanigans, they will act. The information being poured into the electorate is coming from the noisy ends of the spectrum while the mass in the middle, though it might be shrinking, is quietly going about its daily business. If Donald Trump's election truly was a rejection of political elites as Fiorina (2017, 218) suggests, then elites should perhaps fear waking the sleeping giant[71].

[71] Apocryphally attributed to Isoroku Yamamoto, though he likely never said it.

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Appendix A: Ideology-as-Identity Methodology

Spending Indicator Construction

Ellis and Stimson's (2012) assessment of conservatives holding liberal attitudes regarding spending bears investigation. Using the ANES CDF, I construct a series of indicators with which to measure this relationship. The level of spending is indirectly measured through the services-spending question[72]. The question is a 7-point scale with points 1 and 7 labeled. I revise the scale's directionality to match that of the liberal-conservative self-placement question[73] and reset the scale to a -3 to +3, treating 0 as the "keep it about the same" response. The services-spending question has been administered in every ANES survey since 1982 with some exceptions. The data for 2000 does not reflect responses for interviews conducted via telephone (these are coded as missing). The 2004 administration asked the question in both waves and the CDF contains the data for the pre-election wave. Two versions of the question were presented in 2008; the data for the standard question are in the CDF and the data for the new question[74] are not.

There are ten federal services-spending areas addressed in the CDF[75]. Variables and the years with which the correspond with the liberal-conservative-plus-Republican, indicator:

Year	VCF0886	VCF0887	VCF0889	VCF0890	VCF0891	VCF0892	VCF0893	VCF0894	VCF9049
1972									
1976									
1984				X					X
1988		X	X	X	X		X		X
1990		X	X	X		X	X		X
1992	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
2004	X	X		X		X		X	X
2008	X	X		X		X		X	X
2012	X	X		X				X	X
2016	X	X		X				X	X

[72] With some minor variation in wording in 2004, "Some people think the government should provide fewer services, even in areas such as health and education, in order to reduce spending. Other people feel that it is important for the government to provide many more services even if it means an increase in spending. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?"

[73] newvar=8-origvar, keeping the DK/NA/INAP responses separate from the rest

[74] The focus of the new question was on the services side of the issue with responses scaled from "a lot fewer services" to "a lot more services".

[75] Until 2012, "or cut out entirely" was included with the "decrease" response

- VCF0886: aid to the poor. 3-point scale
- VCF0887: child care. 3-point scale
- VCF0889: AIDS research/fight AIDS. 3-point scale
- VCF0890: public schools. 3-point scale (remove: public good)
- VCF0891: federal college financial aid. 3-point scale
- VCF0892: foreign aid. 3-point scale
- VCF0893: the homeless. 3-point scale
- VCF0894: welfare programs. 3-point scale
- VCF9049: social security. 3-point scale

For 1972 and 1976 there is no data to be had. 1984 has data for two questions, 2012 and 2016 have data for five, 1992 has data for eight, and the rest have data for six, although they are not consistently the same questions. Since it is the larger question of spending that is of interest, the specific areas of spending do not matter much and "public goods" like defense, police, and schools are handled separately. An additive index would normally be inappropriate for this, so I construct a quasi-averaged index instead, resetting the response values to a -1 to 1 scale, with 0 being understood as "keep it about the same" and generating a "socialspend" variable which contains the sum of the other variables. Two cases need to be dealt with: NA and DK. Since the non-post respondents have already been removed from the dataset, NA responses mean either "no answer" or "not asked," so I recode these to "missing." "Don't know" responses are not equivalent to "no preference" and should not be included with the "about the same" Instead, I set them to "missing" as it will have the least effect on the respondent's overall preferences for social spending and noting that the vast majority of the DK responses come from those respondents in the non-ideologue category. In the final *socialspend* variable, I treat negative

numbers (<0) as having overall or "on the whole" preferences for increased social spending and positive numbers (>0) as having overall of "on the whole" preferences for decreasing social spending. The expectation of conservative identifiers favoring decreased spending and liberal identifiers favoring increased spending will be satisfied if this proves to be the case. 1984 is the problematic administration due to the small number of spending questions, so later comparisons will be done by including it and excluding to check its impact.

Spending for public goods can be approached in a similar way with VCF0843 (defense spending, 1-7 scale), VCF0888 (spending for crime), and VCF0890 (spending for public schools) as workable indicators. These issue questions appear consistently from 1984 onward.

IdeoAware Indicator Construction

The indicator is a revision of the RePass (2008) PTR indicator. The major revisions are its extension to the full 1972-2016 range of ANES administrations[76] and the modification of the classification and coding of some responses. RePass was not exceptionally clear in the reasoning behind his coding and construction decisions, so I try to "reverse engineer" that reasoning.

Step 1: dataset cleanup (clean copy of the 1948-2016 CDF)

- The liberal-conservative question was first administered in 1972, so all cases prior to 1972 are removed from the dataset. VCF0004 is the year of administration.
- The indicator is a mix of pre- and post-election questions. Only post-election respondents could have given responses to all questions, so any respondents who did not complete the post-election portion are removed from the dataset. Note: some versions of the CDF have the pre- and post-election flag variables incorrectly labeled. In the version I used, VCF0013 is the flag for the presence of

[76] RePass (2008) dealt almost exclusively with the 2004 time-series administration.

post-election data but was mislabeled as a pre-election flag. Fixing required relabeling VCF0013 and VCF0014 to match their data.

- Some respondents were not asked certain questions. In 1972 (the first use of the liberal/conservative self-placement question), for example, about 130 respondents were presented with survey forms which did not include the lib-con question and more than half of respondents (819 out of 1,555 respondents) in 2000 were not asked to self-place on the liberal-conservative dimension. For other years, the number of respondents who did not self-place for one reason or another is a couple of dozen or less. These respondents (VCF0803==0) are removed from the dataset, noting that this makes for a maximum N of 736 respondents for 2000, but all other years are comfortably above 1,000 and most are above 1,500.

Step 2: Construct the Self_Place indicator (done for PTR, but not for IdeoAware)

- The lib-con response set is a 1-7 scale. The IdeoAware indicator requires a 5-point scale. Extremely and Liberal/Conservative are collapsed to a single response (1). This would happen mathematically if the 5/7 conversion were used, without the complication of decimal remainders. But it also works under the idea that these two categories are more solidly at the poles, while "slight" liberals/conservatives may be on the cusp of "moderate" or liberal/conservative. It also makes for a simpler coding matrix. That last may be a bad assumption (and bad practice), but inconsistency between issue preference and the ideological identification has already been addressed, so continuing the inconsistency falls into the category of (hopefully) not making the bad situation worse.

- It is worth noting that there are significant differences in identification between GSS respondents and ANES respondents on the self-placement question. Part of the inconsistency may be due to the "haven't through much about it" option given to ANES respondents, but the only two categories where the numbers track closely in both surveys are in the "slightly conservative" and "conservative" placements. The remainder have enough difference between the lines that there may be something else going on behind the scenes.

Step 3: Construct the ideological perception indicator (PerceivePartyLC)

- Does the respondent have some minimal understanding of liberalism and conservatism as political outlooks or positions? Two approaches are available. The "are there important differences between the parties?" variable (VCF0501) sheds some light on this question but may be more suited to the partisanship or salient issues end of things than to ideology. Being able to identify the Republican party as the more conservative of the two (VCF0502) goes more to the ideology end of things (and follows Converse (1964) to a rough approximation). In the CDF, the 2-part questions of the individual administrations ("is one party more conservative than the other?" and "which party is more conservative?") are combined into a single indicator (VCF0502). As with the "haven't thought about it much" response offered on the self-placement, this variable offers a "wouldn't want to guess" option. Using both variables might make for a more rigorous indicator, depending on how the respondent understands "important differences," but would

significantly reduce the N for some administrations and might work to conflate ideology with partisanship. I reserve VCF0501 for the examination of partisan leanings to avoid this.

- VCF0501 was not presented in 1974, 1978, or 1982 and not presented to all respondents in 1972 (N=1100), 1984 (N=970), 1986 (N=1077), 1990 (N=969), or 1996 (N=746). (**not done**)
- VCF0502 was not presented in 1974, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1986, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, or 2002, and not presented to all respondents in 1972 (N=1097), 1984 (N=966) or 1990 (N=968).
- If combined, an indicator can be constructed for 1972, 1976, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016. The 12-year gap from 1992 to 2004 is troubling.

Step 4: Final Coding for Ideological Awareness

- The last piece sorts the respondents based on their awareness that the Republicans are the more conservative party. As noted earlier, this is a problematic decision considering the number of administrations where the question was not asked. Codings in the previous steps are retained, but any respondents who were not able to identify the Republicans as the more conservative party at the national level are reclassified as non-ideologues.

Appendix B: Partisanship-as-Identity Methodology

Partisanship and Identity

This can be treated like ideology and identity without the added complication of "what does liberal/conservative mean," but it raises some different questions. Superficially, the respondent's vote for president can be taken as verification of their true partisan leanings. This is not a very satisfactory way of doing things because it makes some problematic assumptions, but it is better than using House or Senate elections as a measure of leaning. Prior to the realignment of the South in the late 80s and early 90s, there was no seriously functional Republican Party in the South. This is still true in some cases. El Paso, for example, doesn't really have a solidly functioning Republican Party. In the 2018 midterm, most of the races for state senator and representatives and local governments were uncontested Democrats, indicating the real electoral competition happened during the primaries. So, if a voter did not participate in those (turnout for primaries is typically around 25% to 30%), and they live in a district or county without a strongly functioning two-party system, then presidential vote is only the least problematic of the bunch, making it a Churchillian indicator (the worst, except for all the others).

Based on vote tallies for the 2018 midterm House elections, more than half of House contests were won in districts where the victor got more than 60% of the vote. These types of races can be considered "uncontested" as the opposing party failed to produce much more than a token challenger. A few contests were close, but comfortable (55%-60%) and landslide (60%+) margins were by far the more common. Senate contests were not much better. 13 of the 33 Senate seats were won by landslide margins, and 9 by comfortable margins, leaving only about a third that were "close" contests (if a 10% margin counts as close).

Two models will be necessary. Leaners need to be tested as being partisans and as being independents.

Partisanship Indicator Methodology (Model 1)

Step 1: Clean up the CDF

- Remove all non-Post respondents to ensure that all respondents have responses to all questions within the limits of the contents of the individual surveys
- VCF0013 and VCF0014 are mislabeled. VCF0013 holds the post-election flag, so just needs to be relabeled to reflect this. (*drop if VCF0013==0)*
    - 5,443 cases should be removed. All midterm administrations except 1954 and 2002 show only post-election data. The 1954 administration was conducted in October and only had 27 questions, so is probably ignorable. The other mid-term administrations appear to have been post-election surveys with no pre-election wave (2002 may be the exception to this – a really solid history of the ANES would be very helpful)
        - 1952: 185
        - 1954: 1139
        - 1960: 72
        - 1964: 121
        - 1968: 209
        - 1972: 420
        - 1976: 339
        - 1980: 206
        - 1984: 268
        - 1988: 265
        - 1992: 230
        - 1996: 180
        - 2000: 252
        - 2002: 165
        - 2004: 146
        - 2008: 220
        - 2012: 404
        - 2016: 622
- Remove all non-responses to the partisanship indicator (VCF0301). This is a problematic decision because some respondents initially indicated partisan leaning (Democrat or Republican), but gave DK/Ref on strength of leaning, while

others initially responded Independent, but gave DF/Ref on Democrat/Republican leaning. Since this is a standard pre-election wave question, a third category is respondents who did not complete the pre-election wave. Rather than try to disentangle these three groups (the total N across all administrations is 1,015, with about a third to half in the 1950s), it is simpler to just delete them. (*drop if VCF0301==0*)

- The ability to identify the Republicans as the more conservative party (VCF0502) is unnecessary in the context of partisanship due to its ideological aspects.
- Knowing that there are important differences between the parties (VCF0501) raises an interesting question. If there are no important differences between the parties, then what is the basis for identifying with one or the other? Is this something like "Coke vs. Pepsi" or "Del Monte vs. Green Giant" where it's simply a brand preference or is it more like "My family has always been Democrat (or Republican)," so tradition more than preference?
    - Missing administrations: 1954, 1956, 1958, 1962, 1970, 1974, 2002
- Feeling Thermometer for Democrats/Republicans (VCF0201 and VCF0202) is present only for 1964, 1966, 1968, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1976, 1980, and 1982)
- Feeling Thermometer for Democratic Party (VCF0218) and Republican Party (VCF0224) is present for all administrations between 1978 and 2016, except 2002.
- Interesting question: do respondents see a difference between "Democrats" and "Democratic Party" or "Republicans" and "Republican Party"? Two administrations (1980 and 1982) where both were asked.

- Related question: how closely do respondents see Democrats (VCF0201), Democratic Party (VCF0218), and Liberals (VCF0211), or Republicans (VCF0202), Republican Party (VCF0224), and Conservatives (VCF0212) as being synonymous? There is one administration (1980) where all three overlap.
- Does partisan identification need to be collapsed into a smaller number of categories (partisans and independents) or is leaving it at the 7-point scale sufficient? For regression purposes, the 7-point will give more meaningful marginal effects. For cross-tabs, smaller is better.
- What about identifiers who do not see important differences between the parties? There is no "non-ideologue" category for this, but the "important differences" question might be used as a control/exclusionary flag, but that would require two more models.
- Two other indicators on partisanship: does the respondent care who wins? One indicator for presidency (VCF0311) administered in presidential cycles, and one for Congress (VCF0312) in midterm cycles (stops in 2008).
- Question not in CDF: is it better to have split or unified control of government? Interesting question because of the "it doesn't matter" response option.
- Regression results with Democratic Party (DV) and Partisanship (IV). Year-1 is no control for "important differences," Year-2 is restricting to "yes," Year-3 is "no/DK". All exclude NA/DK/Ref for IV, DV, and controls.

Effect of Partisanship on Democratic Party Feeling Thermometer				
Year	**ME**	**SE**	**N**	**R2**
1980-1	-7.12***	0.25	1332	0.38
1980-2	-7.60***	0.30	798	0.45
1980-3	-6.00***	0.46	532	0.25
1984-1	-6.21***	0.19	1879	0.43
1984-2	-7.62***	0.32	593	0.50
1984-3	-5.86***	0.49	327	0.31
1986-1	-6.96***	0.18	2048	0.42
1986-2	-8.22***	0.32	492	0.57
1986-3	-5.26***	0.39	521	0.26
1988-1	-7.19***	0.21	1678	0.41
1988-2	-7.85***	0.25	1027	0.49
1988-3	-5.59***	0.38	649	0.25
1990-1	-6.01***	0.20	1850	0.33
1990-2	-6.55***	0.36	431	0.43
1990-3	-5.32***	0.41	486	0.26
1992-1	-7.04***	0.18	2158	0.41
1992-2	-7.57***	0.21	1325	0.50
1992-3	-5.84***	0.34	829	0.26
1994-1	-7.72***	0.19	1750	0.48
1994-2	-8.66***	0.23	921	0.61
1994-3	-5.83***	0.33	824	0.28
1996-1	-7.99***	0.22	1505	0.47
1996-2	-8.52***	0.35	481	0.55
1996-3	-6.39***	0.71	250	0.25
1998-1	-6.94***	0.25	1245	0.38
1998-2	-7.73***	0.30	728	0.48
1998-3	-5.34***	0.45	515	0.21
2000-1	-8.21***	0.22	1496	0.47
2000-2	-8.61***	0.24	1012	0.55
2000-3	-6.88***	0.49	483	0.29
2004-1	-7.87***	0.25	1028	0.49
2004-2	-8.06***	0.27	803	0.52
2004-3	-6.34***	0.62	223	0.32
2008-1	-8.91***	0.20	2025	0.51
2008-2	-9.36***	0.21	1536	0.57
2008-3	-6.60***	0.53	486	0.24
2012-1	-10.21***	0.12	5441	0.57
2012-2	-10.41***	0.12	4492	0.61
2012-3	-8.64***	0.42	928	0.30
2016-1	-10.28***	0.15	3579	0.56
2016-2	-10.60***	0.16	3026	0.60
2016-3	-6.99***	0.58	546	0.21
Source: ANES CDF, 1948-2016				

Effect of Partisanship on Republican Party Feeling Thermometer				
Year	**ME**	**SE**	**N**	**R2**
1980-1	5.37***	0.26	1328	0.25
1980-2	5.98***	0.31	797	0.31
1980-3	4.03***	0.45	529	0.13
1984-1	6.75***	0.22	1884	0.34
1984-2	7.55***	0.36	592	0.43
1984-3	4.71***	0.56	330	0.18
1986-1	6.43***	0.21	2054	0.31
1986-2	7.73***	0.39	492	0.45
1986-3	3.99***	0.43	521	0.15
1988-1	6.89***	0.23	1683	0.35
1988-2	7.52***	0.27	1029	0.43
1988-3	5.42***	0.42	652	0.21
1990-1	5.70***	0.23	1851	0.25
1990-2	6.95***	0.45	431	0.36
1990-3	3.51***	0.46	488	0.11
1992-1	6.27***	0.20	2162	0.31
1992-2	6.99***	0.24	1325	0.39
1992-3	4.53***	0.37	833	0.15
1994-1	6.06***	0.20	1745	0.34
1994-2	7.50***	0.24	919	0.52
1994-3	3.48***	0.34	821	0.11
1996-1	6.58***	0.23	1498	0.36
1996-2	7.25***	0.36	481	0.45
1996-3	5.03***	0.64	247	0.20
1998-1	6.93***	0.27	1236	0.35
1998-2	7.64***	0.33	727	0.43
1998-3	5.19***	0.47	507	0.19
2000-1	6.75***	0.24	1493	0.36
2000-2	7.15***	0.26	1013	0.43
2000-3	5.50***	0.52	480	0.19
2004-1	8.71***	0.28	1027	0.49
2004-2	9.22***	0.30	803	0.55
2004-3	6.18***	0.77	222	0.23
2008-1	7.99***	0.22	2018	0.39
2008-2	8.45***	0.24	1533	0.46
2008-3	5.41***	0.58	482	0.15
2012-1	9.04***	0.13	5434	0.48
2012-2	9.38***	0.13	4489	0.53
2012-3	6.01***	0.43	924	0.17
2016-1	8.17***	0.16	3565	0.42
2016-2	8.44***	0.16	3014	0.47
2016-3	5.41***	0.58	544	0.14
Source: ANES CDF, 1948-2016				

Vita

Mark Stinson graduated from Richardson High School in Richardson, Texas, in 1976. Following graduation, he served in the U.S. Army from 1977 to 1982, and was stationed in Hanau, Germany and Fort Sill, Oklahoma and much preferred the former to the latter. He entered college following his military service, initially at West Texas State University, but graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso in 1989 with a B.A. in History. He taught secondary-level social studies in the Clint Independent School District from 1993 until 2016 and taught courses in computer hardware maintenance and network design at the University of Phoenix from 2002-2003. He has authored no academic publications but has written several guides for various video games.

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