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

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The Clearer Cue of Partisanship

More Partisan Voters

Other Heuristics & Partisanship

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PARTISAN OFFICES

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

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

DEMOCRATIC PARTY

REPUBLICAN PARTY

IOWA GREEN PARTY

LIBERTARIAN PARTY

► Opening Question: How do political parties solve the collective action problem for voters?
# Parties Solving Collective Action: Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arena:</th>
<th>Collective Action Problems</th>
<th>Parties Help Solve by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electorate</td>
<td>Free riding</td>
<td>Branding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rational abstention</td>
<td>• Focus of collective responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rational ignorance</td>
<td>• Heuristic; party id. Mobilization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>• Coordination of politicians’ ambition</td>
<td>• Nomination (agenda setting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Getting elected to office</td>
<td>• Mobilization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Fundraising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>• Transaction costs for making policy.</td>
<td>“Long” coalition; ready-made support for party policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Coalition maintenance</td>
<td>• Agenda control and the problem of cycling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Imagine a President Perot or Blumberg...or Trump?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# General Overview of *Party Theory* relative to Pluralism

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

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

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

Congressional Parties

- Democratic Caucus
- Republican Conference

Ideological Placement (Liberal-Conservative)
Evidence of Elite Polarization: U.S. Senate

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

Congressional Parties
- Democratic Caucus
- Republican Conference

I ideological Placement (Liberal-Conservative)
Levendusky’s Experiment: ↑ Polarization ↑ Consistency

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

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

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

Data: American National Election Study (ANES)
Greater Congruence with Ideological Preferences

Correlation between Partisanship & Ideological Preferences, 1972-2016

Data: American National Election Study (ANES)
Decline of the Southern Democratic Wing

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

Data: American National Election Study (ANES)
Decline of Split Ticket Voting


Data: American National Election Study (ANES)
Greater Emphasis on Left-Right Spectrum

FIGURE 8  Mean position of conservatives/moderate/liberals and Republicans/Independents/Democrats on whether abortion should be legal. Source: NES Cumulative File.
Greater Ideological Consistency in Both Parties

I ideological Preferences by Voter Self-Reported Partisan Affiliation, 1972-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Republicans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data: American National Election Study (ANES)
### Percent Voting for Obama by Ideology & Party, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partisanship</th>
<th>Liberal</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>DK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>97.2%</td>
<td>87.6%</td>
<td>83.7%</td>
<td>92.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data: 2012 American National Election Study*
Party ID & Proximity Voting in Presidential Elections

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

Conservative

Liberal

Voter Candidate Proximity

Probability of Voting Democratic

Republican

Independent

Democrat

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Party ID & Proximity Voting in Senate Elections

Probability of Voting Democratic by Ideological Proximity & Partisanship, 2016 Senate Elections (CCES)

- Republican
- Independent
- Democrat

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Probability of Voting Democratic by Ideological Proximity & Partisanship, 2016 House Elections (CCES)

- Conservative
- Liberal
- Voter Candidate Proximity
- Probability of Voting Democratic
- Republican
- Independent
- Democrat
Party ID & Ideological Voting in Presidential Elections

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

- Republican
- Independent
- Democrat

Voter Ideological Preference (Conservative-Liberal)
Probability of Voting Democratic by Ideological Preference & Partisanship, 2016 Senate Elections (CCES)
Probability of Voting Democratic by Ideological Preference & Partisanship, 2016 House Elections (CCES)
# Partisanship & “Correct” Proximity Voting

### Party ID & Proximity Voting, 2016 Presidential Election

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<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>% of Sample</th>
<th>% Casting Proximity Vote</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party ID &amp; Proximity Overlap</td>
<td>94.11%</td>
<td>97.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict Independents</td>
<td>16.81%</td>
<td>90.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party ID &amp; Proximity Conflict</td>
<td>5.89%</td>
<td>2.22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Data: 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Study*
Partisanship & “Correct” Proximity Voting

**Party ID & Proximity Voting, 2016 Senate Elections**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party ID &amp; Proximity Overlap</td>
<td>91.04%</td>
<td>96.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict Independents</td>
<td>16.81%</td>
<td>86.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party ID &amp; Proximity Conflict</td>
<td>8.97%</td>
<td>3.25%</td>
</tr>
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Data: 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Study
### Party ID & Proximity Voting, 2016 House Elections

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party ID &amp; Proximity Overlap</td>
<td>87.89%</td>
<td>97.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict Independents</td>
<td>16.81%</td>
<td>83.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party ID &amp; Proximity Conflict</td>
<td>12.11%</td>
<td>2.76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Data: 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Study*
Key Points:

- Parties help solve collective action in the electoral arena by providing voters with a focus on collective responsibility (through party brand) & partisan heuristic ↓ transaction costs to voting

- Levendusky finds evidence ↑ elite (partisan polarization) = ↑ consistency of issue beliefs (ideology)

- Parties are becoming more polarized & voters more partisan (intensity)

- Greater ideological consistency in both political parties (voters), decline of conservative Democrats & Liberal Republicans

- Strong relationship between vote-choice & ideological/partisan preferences (preferences highly correlated)

- When PID & ideological proximity (spatial model) overlap, voters cast “correct” votes