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

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Agenda

1. The Clearer Cue of Partisanship
2. More Partisan Voters
3. Other Heuristics & Partisanship
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?
### Political Parties and Problems of Collective Action

<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>
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<td></td>
<td>• Rational ignorance</td>
<td>• Heuristic; party id.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Mobilization</td>
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Levendusky: *Benefits* of Elite Polarization

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Elite divisions over abortion, racial issues, & environmental issues provide voters with more consistent cues.
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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)
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- Can you think of a cost of this “benefit” of elite polarization?
More Partisan & *Consistent* Voters

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

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

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)

Ticket
- Straight
- Split
Figure 8  Mean position of conservatives/moderate/liberals and Republicans/Independents/Democrats on whether abortion should be legal. Source: NES Cumulative File.
The Clearer Cue of Partisanship

More Partisan Voters

Other Heuristics & Partisanship

Carlos Algara

Introduction to American Politics: Meeting 8
Greater Ideological Consistency in Both Parties

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

Democrats

Ideology
- Liberal
- Moderate
- Conservative

Republicans

Data: American National Election Study (ANES)
### Strong Relationship between Vote-Choice & Ideology/Party

**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*
Probability of Voting Democratic by Ideological Proximity & Partisanship, 2016 Presidential Election (CCES)
Party ID & Proximity Voting in Senate Elections

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

- Conservative
- Liberal

Voter Candidate Proximity

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

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

- Republican
- Independent
- Democrat
Probability of Voting Democratic by Ideological Preference & Partisanship, 2016 House Elections (CCES)

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

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<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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<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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**Partisanship & “Correct” Proximity Voting**

*Party ID & Proximity Voting, 2016 House Elections*

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<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>
</table>

*Data: 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Study*
Partisanship & Valence Perceptions

Party identification and valence ratings in 2012

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

Source: Stone (2015) UC Davis Pol 1 Seminar
Partisanship & Valence Perceptions

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

Source: Stone (2015) UC Davis Pol 1 Seminar
Partisanship & Valence Perceptions

Effect of Unemployment Perceptions on Vote by Party Identification

Source: Stone (2015) UC Davis Pol 1 Seminar
Key Points:

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