

PARTY ASYMMETRY IN AMERICAN ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

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Abstract:

The Democratic Party is primarily an alliance of social groups while the Republican Party is best understood as the agent of an ideological movement. Asymmetries in the construction, image, and orientation of each party are associated with unique advantages in electoral competition. As a result, primary elections follow distinct fashions within each party. The unique strategic tendencies of each party also appear in general election campaigns, despite the incentives to appeal to independents. Republican campaigns are more likely to be ideologically-oriented than Democratic campaigns, which rely more on appeals to group interests and specific policy positions.

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Mitt Romney's loss in the 2012 American presidential election apparently came as a shock to the candidate. A combination of large, enthusiastic crowds at his public rallies and overly favorable internal polling results had sufficiently convinced the Republican nominee of his impending victory that he had not even prepared a concession speech when Democratic incumbent Barack Obama was declared the winner on Election Night (Rucker 2012; Scheiber 2012). Attempting to make sense of his unexpected defeat, Romney told a conference call of top financial donors a week after the election that "what the president's campaign did was focus on certain members of his base coalition ... following the old playbook of giving a lot of stuff to groups," while his own campaign had instead been "talking about big issues for the whole country" (Reston 2012). Romney aides expressed amazement at how Obama's advisors had "rolled out a new policy for a different segment of their coalition they hoped to attract" at regular intervals over the course of the campaign, including federal student loan policies designed to appeal to college students and recent graduates, support for same-sex marriage (popular among gay and lesbian voters and social liberals), and liberalized immigration initiatives of particular interest to Latinos—methodically assembling a large enough base of popular support to win reelection despite the sluggish performance of the national economy (Dickerson 2012).

Romney's comments were largely dismissed by Democrats as the rationalization of a sore loser, and even some Republicans distanced themselves from the implication that Obama had traded government-bestowed "gifts" to key electoral constituencies in exchange for their votes (Gibson 2012). (All of the policy proposals were part of a programmatic agenda, after all, not selective benefits provided by the party.) Yet Romney's inelegantly expressed remarks contained the germ of a perceptive observation identifying an enduring difference between the two major parties. Democrats indeed draw the bulk of their electoral support from members of discrete social groups primarily attracted to the party on the basis of shared interests or identity, while Republican voters

are a more socially homogeneous bloc principally motivated by their commitment to a more abstract ideology. Romney was hardly the first presidential candidate to recognize this distinction. According to the election chronicler Theodore White, Richard Nixon noted during his successful 1972 reelection campaign that he “wasn’t putting groups together in a coalition the way [Democratic president Franklin D.] Roosevelt had – he was trying to cut across groups, binding people in every group who had the same ideas” (White 1973, 299).

In 2012, this asymmetry was visible in the online strategies pursued by Obama and Romney in what was sometimes called the first “social media election” (Savitz 2012; Cruz 2012). Although both sides maintained an active presence on Facebook encouraging supporters to “like” the candidate and “share” content generated by the campaign, the Obama campaign also created more than 20 subsidiary pages designed to court voters on the basis of shared social identity—including Women for Obama, African Americans for Obama, Latinos for Obama, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders for Obama, Students for Obama, and Obama Pride (for gay and lesbian supporters). The campaign produced specialized posts within these subgroups to communicate Obama’s positions on issues of particular interest to their members. In contrast, Romney’s social media efforts did not place comparable emphasis on online outreach along the lines of group identity. The Romney campaign instead focused more narrowly on the candidate’s central message, criticizing the performance of the national economy during Obama’s first term while touting Romney’s experience as a successful business leader (Elston 2012).

We have previously examined this foundational asymmetry between the parties in public opinion, party identification, and governing style in Congress (Grossmann and Hopkins 2015). This paper extends our analysis to electoral campaigns, finding a similar mismatch in the internal structure and public reputation of the two parties, the nature of party nomination politics, and the conduct of party candidates in general elections. We conclude that party asymmetry is also prevalent

in the conduct of campaigns, accounting for important differences in the strategic behavior of candidates on both sides.

Party Asymmetry in Theoretical Context

Theories of American political parties often implicitly treat the Democrats and Republicans as mirror images. Aldrich (2011, 17) portrays parties as arising from the rational interest of politicians, arguing that ambitious office seekers (candidates and elected officials) in each party are its “central” and “most important” figures. Party leaders control decision-making, curating a “brand name” for politicians to use to their advantage in elections (Cox and McCubbins 2005), while a structure of party competition created and maintained by actors located within governmental institutions and formal party organizations limits the internal influence of activists, donors, and party-identified voters.

Contemporary research has increasingly challenged this politician-centered view of party politics, arguing that each party is effectively governed by an “extended network” that connects formal party officials with interest groups and activists (Desmarais, La Raja, and Kowal 2014; Koger, Masket and Noel 2009; Masket 2009; Herrnson 2009). Kathleen Bawn et al. (2012) have developed an alternative theory of American parties as coalitions of “intense policy demanders” who have constructed stable alliances in order to maximize their chances of electoral victory. Because these interests are motivated in both parties by programmatic objectives, their support of politicians is contingent upon securing policy-related commitments, accounting for the divergence of substantive issue positions between the two parties.

In contrast to recent theoretical approaches, older analyses of American party politics placed more emphasis on each party’s distinctive nature (Nexon 1971; Mayhew 1966). Jo Freeman’s (1986) study of convention delegates, organizations, and rules found a unique “party culture” on each side,

encompassing attitudes, internal structure, and style. The Democratic Party, she observed, is organized around its component constituencies: official caucuses serve as “primary reference groups” for members, while proposals for internal reforms are often designed to “impose requirements for demographic representation.” Republican factionalism instead tends to occur along ideological lines or around charismatic candidates (Freeman, 334-6).

Our approach unites the long-standing recognition of differences between Democrats and Republicans with the more recent reconceptualization of American parties as extended networks connecting officeholders and candidates with activists and interest groups. But we also emphasize how the distinct character of each party’s network interacts with the differences in their primary electorates and the unique advantages retained by each party within the general electorate. Rather than treat voters as simply the passive subjects of elite influence, we view the nature of mass opinion and party identity as exerting substantial effects on politicians in both parties as they seek to win support from the mass public. Because Democratic supporters are bound to their favored party principally on the basis of social identity and interest, Democratic candidates primarily appeal to voters on those terms. Republicans instead prefer to employ campaign rhetoric that stresses ideological congeniality. Although general election campaigns ordinarily require each side to court voters outside the party, the simultaneous symbolic conservatism and operational liberalism of the American public enables both parties to choose distinct campaign messages that both mobilize their base and attract support from the wider electorate.

Asymmetry in Party Structure

In our previous research (Grossmann and Hopkins 2015), we argued that the Democratic Party in the electorate is mostly populated by members of discrete social minority groups who pressure party leaders to deliver concrete government action furthering their interests and who

pragmatically settle for partial victories in pursuit of these goals. Republican supporters, in contrast, are more likely to demand stricter adherence to abstract ideological doctrine, regularly judging their own party's leaders as failing to uphold conservative principles. We demonstrated that Democratic identifiers tend to describe party conflict as representing a clash of group interests, while Republicans tend to view the parties as separated by ideology. Most rank-and-file Democrats also consistently prefer a more moderate to a more liberal party leadership and prize public officials who are open to making compromises, whereas Republicans are more likely to favor a more conservative party led by officeholders who stick to their principles. These differences extend beyond party electorates, appearing among party activists and financial donors as well. They are further reinforced by American public opinion, which tends to be collectively left-leaning on most specific policy issues yet right-of-center on more general ideological orientations such as beliefs about the proper size of government (Free and Cantril 1967; Ellis and Stimson 2012).

The disproportionate centrality of ideology in the Republican Party can be illustrated in its most basic form by citing an enduring partisan asymmetry in ideological self-identification: the proportion of Republicans who identify as conservatives perennially far exceeds the share of Democrats who consider themselves liberals. To be sure, the mass public routinely exhibits an imperfect association between symbolic identification and actual issue positions—many citizens with substantively left-of-center views on policy issues nevertheless decline to accept the liberal label—yet this partisan discrepancy holds even among the relatively attentive and well-informed segment of the electorate. Figure 1 summarizes the ideological self-identification of respondents to the 2012 American National Election Studies (ANES), comparing Democratic and Republican partisans, activists (those who reported engaging in two or more campaign activities), and donors. Nearly three-quarters of Republican identifiers are conservatives, a level of ideological commitment that increases further among politically sophisticated activists and donors. On the Democratic side, a

majority of identifiers reject a liberal self-identity, while liberals constitute a bare majority of party activists and less than two-thirds of donors. Even members of the most politically active Democratic population are less likely to identify as party-consistent ideologues than the average Republican.

[Figure 1 here]

The ideological nature of the Republican Party renders it a consistent outlier in comparative studies of political parties. To illustrate, Figure 2 provides a summary of party ideological placement based on an analysis of platform (or manifesto) language in the U.S., U.K., Canada, and France (for full data description, see Volkens et al. 2013). The Republican Party is significantly more conservative than center-right parties in these nations (and all others); in this group, the most similarly placed party to the Republican Party is the French National Front, a far-right nativist party. The Democratic Party is by the same measure very slightly left-of-center in international terms.

[Figure 2 here]

This view of the Republican Party as an ideological outlier in international comparisons is confirmed by expert surveys that further differentiate among dimensions of policy conflict. Figure 3 illustrates the average placement of the two American parties on five different ideological scales in comparison to the international average across parties in 88 countries (for full data description, see Kitschelt and Freeze 2010). Across these dimensions, the Republican Party holds the most consistently conservative positions of any political party in the world. Though parties like the French National Front score as more conservative than the Republican Party on the national identity dimension, even these other right-wing parties do not take equally conservative positions on redistribution, the role of the state, and public spending. The Democratic Party, in contrast, rates as slightly left of the international party average on all five ideological dimensions.

[Figure 3 here]

Because the American political system has only two competitive political parties (the fewest in the industrialized world), the Democratic Party also stands out in international comparisons—but not for its ideological consistency. Rather, the Democrats have assembled the broadest coalition of social groups and associated civil society linkages in the industrialized world. Figure 4 compares each American party's group connections to the international average across parties (based on the same expert surveys). The Democrats are often rated as maintaining links to all six group categories tested: unions, business, religious, ethnic, geographic, and gender. The Republican Party is also more broadly linked than average, but primarily due to its strong ties to business and religious groups. Interestingly, these broad group links appear even though the expert survey questions were designed to assess the targets of clientelist exchanges. Neither the Republicans nor the Democrats are viewed as clientelist parties: they no longer offer government jobs, contracts, or selective programs for party votes. Nevertheless, programmatic parties may still rely on group-based appeals because policy programs have disproportionate impacts on group interests (Kitschelt 2000). If parties develop coherent agendas matching their group coalition, they can sustain both types of linkage systems; programmatic group-based appeals, however, sometimes provoke a right-wing backlash and may be less consistent with conservative ideology (Kitschelt 2000).

[Figure 4 here]

The relative importance of groups within the Democratic Party is confirmed by surveys of party convention delegates. Democratic delegates report many more organizational ties than Republicans, especially to organizations representing social group constituencies. Table 1 lists characteristics of delegate organizational ties at each party's 2008 national convention. Individual Democrats average 35% more organizational memberships than Republicans, while Democratic delegates are collectively associated with 29% more organizations. Republican delegates disproportionately report membership in ideological organizations whereas Democrats

disproportionately cite identity-based organizations. Prior analysis of the structure of network ties in these data by Michael Heaney, Seth Masket, Joanne Miller, and Dara Strolovitch (2012) demonstrated that organizational ties are much more concentrated among a small number of organizations in the Republican Party. Democratic memberships, in contrast, are much more evenly dispersed among single-issue and identity based organizations.

[Table 1 here]

These findings are not specific to the 2008 election. For comparison, Table 1 also presents data from a survey of 1980 state convention delegates across the United States (from Rapoport, McGlennon, and Abramowitz 1986). Despite the different time period and level of government, Democrats exhibit much more organizational involvement than their Republican counterparts. The pattern is also evident in the 2000 national Convention Delegate Survey, which specifically asked respondents whether their activities with demographic or ideological groups were more important than their party activities (see Shufeldt 2014). A majority of Democrats agreed that their demographic group activities were more important; some Republicans also agreed, but the primary demographic group Republicans referenced was geographic (their home state or region). Republicans were more likely than Democrats to agree that their activity on behalf of an ideological group was more important. The 2012 national Convention Delegate Survey asked respondents to identify their “most important group.” Democrats were more likely to report demographic and single-issue groups; Republicans were more likely to single out ideological groups (Shufeldt 2014).

The divergent pattern of interest group involvement also appears in studies of the extended party networks. Gregory Koger, Seth Masket, and Hans Noel (2009) made donations to political organizations and candidates in different pseudonyms and recorded what other mail they received to those addresses—a clever way to track shared mailing lists among Democrats and Republicans. As Table 2 shows, donors to Democratic candidates and causes are rewarded with a lot more junk mail.

There are more than three times as many shared mailing list ties on the Democratic side than on the Republican side and 2.6 times as many organizations sharing contacts. Interest groups are much more central parts of the Democratic network. There are six times as many interest groups in the major Democratic Party factions (Koger, Masket, and Noel 2010). Democratic interest groups top the list of most central organizations in their extended party network, including those with single-issue concerns. On the Republican side, ideological newsmagazines are the most central organizations sharing names. Republican formal party organizations exchanged their mailing lists with four media outlets and two candidates; Democratic formal party organizations exchanged with nine interest groups, three media outlets, and three candidates.

[Table 2 here]

A study of employment histories of 527 organization staff (Skinner, Masket, and Dulio 2012) also found significant party differences. The Republican Party network was more hierarchical, with more dominant roles played by party organizations and presidential administrations. The Democratic Party network included a broader role for unions and single-issue groups and was more internally divided by issue concern. Even when considering how staff members move in and out of affiliated organizations, the parties are structured dissimilarly.

Party scholarship has demonstrated the value of expanding the definition of parties beyond the official party apparatus to include interest groups, activists, donors, and news media figures. Yet the archetypical network of “intense policy demanders” appears to fit the Democratic Party better than the Republican Party. The Democrats maintain a dense web of regularly supportive and diverse interest groups that share information and ties, while the Republican Party network is simpler, less group-oriented, and more broadly ideological. This matches the Republicans’ consistently conservative ideological orientation, which is unique in the world.

Party Advantages in Electoral Competition

The Democrats and the Republicans maintain consistent relative advantages in electoral competition. Most importantly, the public contains more self-identified Democrats than Republicans but more conservatives than liberals. Assuming comparable levels of electoral loyalty among partisans and ideologues on both sides, Democratic candidates therefore need to attract a majority of moderate voters in order to achieve victory while Republicans need to prevail among self-identified independents. The overall electorate also generally favors liberal positions on specific policy proposals but favors conservative positions on the overall size and scope of government. These tendencies are especially pronounced among independents, encouraging Republicans to campaign on broad ideological themes and providing Democrats an equally powerful incentive to emphasize their views on individual issues. Democrats likewise benefit by drawing attention away from their broader ideology, just as Republicans may seek to avoid publicizing the extremity of their specific policy positions.

The public reputations of the parties reflect these relative advantages. Figure 5 illustrates several dimensions of public perceptions of the parties in 2014. More citizens perceive the Democrats as caring about people like themselves, matching the Democrats' perception of their party as representing the disadvantaged against the interests of the powerful (Grossmann and Hopkins 2015). Citizens view the Republican Party as having more extreme issue positions but they view the Democratic Party as wanting to “radically transform America,” reflecting the public's distinctive combination of broad conservatism and specific liberalism (and, perhaps, popular identification of the Democratic Party with “change” in the Obama era). The Republicans hold a small advantage on shared values, but they are seen as more influenced by lobbyists; the Democrats do not pay a penalty for their group connections, likely because the public sees their party as less tied to business. The Republican Party also maintains an advantage in citizen perceptions of their ability

to keep America safe, reflecting the party's traditional "ownership" of the foreign policy and military domains (Petrocik, Benoit, and Hansen 2003).

[Figure 5 here]

The American public's view of party strengths does not simply reflect the generic advantages of all liberal and conservative parties. Figure 6 provides an international comparison of the American parties' relative performance on two survey questions from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems: one asking which party better represents respondents' views and one asking whether party respondents feel closer to one party or the other. In other countries, these two questions produce pluralities for the same party; there was no general tendency for left or right parties to perform better on one of these questions. Yet in the U.S., the Democrats are favored as the party that respondents have a closer feeling toward while the Republicans are favored as the party that respondents say represents their views. This matches the ideological and partisan disjuncture in public opinion: Americans regularly place themselves on the ideological right despite closer aggregate identification with the Democratic Party.

[Figure 6 here]

The parties' reputations usually extend to their individual nominees as well. Figure 7 shows two indicators of the advantages of Republican and Democratic presidential candidates on their perceived traits (as summarized by Hayes 2005). Voters perennially perceive Democratic candidates as caring more than Republicans about common people; Republican candidates are usually, but less consistently, rated as being stronger leaders. Republicans are also usually viewed as more moral than Democrats, while Democratic candidates usually hold an advantage in perceptions of relative compassion.

[Figure 7 here]

The specific policy positions of Democratic candidates are consistently more popular than those of Republican candidates (Ellis and Stimson 2012), but the Republicans also maintain some issue-based advantages. On consensus issue areas, they are viewed as better able to manage national security matters. Table 3 reports their average relative “issue ownership” advantages across 12 areas (from Egan 2013). The Republican advantages are concentrated in domestic and international security whereas the Democratic advantages are more widespread across domestic policy issues.

[Table 3 here]

Both parties thus have significant strengths to draw from in their pursuit of electoral majorities, but the Democratic Party benefits from emphasizing shared identity, interests, and specific issue positions whereas Republican candidates are aided by the party’s broader ideological orientation and perceptions of strength in national security. Of course, both parties could also decide to pursue strategies oriented toward mobilizing their base rather than persuading independent voters. Since the 1930s, Democrats have been able to win presidential elections simply by taking advantage of an overall numeric advantage in partisan identifiers, which allowed Obama to defeat Romney in 2012 despite Romney’s victory among independent voters. However, Republicans maintain a structural advantage in congressional and state legislative races due to the more efficient distribution of their supporters across geographic constituencies, which allows them to assemble national majorities without winning a substantial share of votes from Democrats (or even achieving an overall popular plurality, as occurred in the 2012 election for the House of Representatives).

The ideological homogeneity of Republicans provides the party with inherent advantages in employing a strategy of base mobilization. Republican identifiers consistently turn out to vote at higher rates and defect less often to Democratic candidates; they are also more likely to report engaging in all forms of political activism: influencing others, attending meetings, working for candidates, displaying campaign paraphernalia, and contributing money (Shufeldt 2014). Recent

evidence also suggests that implicit Republican partisan identity is stronger, contributing to greater information processing and behavioral biases in favor of their party (Theodoridis 2015). Gregory Shufeldt (2014) finds that Republicans' disproportionate activism is a product of lower levels of ambivalence between their group and partisan identities; Democrats experience much higher levels of internal conflict between their partisanship and their ideological and social group identities, dampening their partisan activism.

Party Asymmetry in Nomination Politics

In the past several years, an open struggle has erupted over the direction of the Republican Party between “establishment” and “insurgent” (or “Tea Party”) officeholders, candidates, activists, media figures, and voters. This conflict is primarily fueled by the belief among Tea Party adherents that establishment Republicans have failed to remain true to conservative principles or supply effective opposition to the policy agenda advanced by the Obama-led Democratic Party (Skocpol and Williamson 2012). No comparable left-wing movement exists within Democratic ranks, leaving Republican politicians much more vulnerable than their Democratic colleagues to ideologically-based opposition in primary elections. Purist conservative organizations such as the Club for Growth, FreedomWorks, and Heritage Action now raise and spend millions of dollars on behalf of endorsed candidates in Republican primaries, with sufficient success that Republican incumbents are obliged to take such threats seriously when engaging in position-taking activities such as roll-call voting and bill sponsorship. Prominent Republican members of Congress who lost renomination bids to more stringently conservative challengers since 2010 include senators Lisa Murkowski of Alaska (who won re-election as a write-in candidate), Richard Lugar of Indiana, and Robert Bennett of Utah, as well as House Majority Leader Eric Cantor of Virginia; in addition, current senators Rand Paul of Kentucky and Ted Cruz of Texas won upsets in Republican primaries running as

devotedly conservative outsiders against veteran statewide officeholders associated with the party establishment.

Although the strength of this national effort to enforce ideological doctrine via the Republican primary election process has increased significantly in recent years, it represents an intensification of an existing asymmetry between the parties rather than a dramatic break with the past. Figure 8 demonstrates that Republican primary challenges in congressional elections have consistently been more likely to be based on ideology than have Democratic challenges over the period between 1970 and 2014 (using data from Boatright 2013, 2014). By the 2010s, nearly half of all Republican challenges were ideological in nature—a rate nearly four times as high as that of Democratic challenges. Democratic primary challenges, in contrast, were much more likely to be based on race (11% to 0.3%) and were slightly more likely to be invited by the incumbent’s involvement in scandal.

[Figure 8 here]

Overall, Democratic primaries are more likely to involve competition over diverse group endorsements. Table 4 lists the number of national interest groups that made endorsements in congressional campaigns prior to the primary election date in 2002 (using data reported in Grossmann and Dominguez 2009). There are more than twice as many interest groups active in Democratic primary politics. Unions dominate on the Democratic side, but there are also significantly more identity-based groups active in Democratic campaigns. Ideological groups are even, but make up a larger proportion of interests involved on the Republican side.

[Table 4 here]

The parties are also distinct in the extent to which they nominate candidates who share descriptive characteristics with the bulk of the population within the electoral constituency. Table 5 demonstrates this difference based on data from state legislative officeholders and candidates (from

Preuhs and Juenke 2011). The vast majority of Democratic officeholders who are members of racial minority groups represent majority-minority constituencies; Democratic minority candidates are also more likely to seek office in these districts than in districts that are heavily white. Republican minority officeholders, however, are much more likely to represent majority-white districts, and a majority of non-white Republican candidates sought office in mostly or heavily white constituencies. Descriptive representation of racial groups among both candidates and officeholders thus occurs more frequently in the Democratic Party.

[Table 5 here]

The two parties' foundational dissimilarity is often revealed in the presidential nomination process. Republican presidential candidates appeal to primary and caucus voters by explicitly presenting themselves as conservatives in good standing while attacking their opponents for insufficient devotion to the party's ideological principles. Nearly every major Republican presidential candidate since Ronald Reagan has claimed the mantle of Reagan-style conservatism, with Reagan himself serving as a frequently-invoked symbol of conservative purity.

In 2012, Mitt Romney delivered a mid-campaign speech at the 2012 Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in which he famously described himself as a "severely conservative" governor of Massachusetts. Romney used the words "conservative" or "conservatism" a total of 25 times in a 25-minute speech, including references to "conservative values," "conservative principles," "conservative constants," and "conservative convictions." Romney was far from the only Republican contender to rely heavily upon openly ideological rhetoric; in a debate held several weeks earlier in advance of the Florida primary, the four candidates collectively uttered the word "conservative" a total of 25 times, making it the third most common substantive word of the debate after "taxes" and "economy," according to a tally conducted by the *Washington Post* (2012).

Critical news coverage of Romney's CPAC appearance treated the "severely conservative" remark as an example of a politically maladroit candidate awkwardly overcompensating for a tenure as governor that had, in fact, included significant departures from conservative doctrine such as support for legalized abortion and the enactment of a government-mandated universal health insurance initiative (e.g. Martin 2012). Yet the speech's theme was consistent with Romney's larger campaign message. Counting on forgiveness of his own past apostasies once he pledged loyalty to the conservative cause, Romney spent much of the 2012 campaign attacking his Republican rivals from the ideological right, positioning himself as the most conservative plausible nominee in the race. For example, Romney criticized former House Speaker Newt Gingrich for his former support of cap-and-trade legislation designed to address climate change, charged that former Pennsylvania senator Rick Santorum had departed from conservative orthodoxy on budgetary issues by repeatedly voting to raise the federal debt ceiling and by supporting legislative earmarks while in Congress, and attacked Texas governor Rick Perry for his relatively lenient policies on illegal immigration.

Like Romney in 2012, John McCain in 2008 was widely portrayed by the mainstream media as a relative moderate within the Republican field. Yet McCain, too, distinguished himself by claiming a conservative identity. McCain declared his unconditional support for George W. Bush's Iraq policy, placing him to the right of Romney, who had proposed setting a deadline for the withdrawal of American armed forces from the country. He also emphasized his fiscally conservative record in the Senate, which had included railing against earmarks and pork-barrel spending—another popular stance among ideological conservatives. Besides Romney, McCain's competitive rivals for the nomination included former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani, a social liberal and gun control advocate, and former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee, whose social conservatism stood in contrast with a more centrist approach on economic and business issues. Despite his reputation among the Washington press corps as a maverick Republican who regularly

delighted in differing with the orthodoxy of his party, McCain in 2008 did not stand out as less consistently conservative than the other major Republican presidential candidates.

McCain's second presidential campaign seemed intent on avoiding the mistakes of his first bid in 2000, when he had earned the "maverick" label while placing second in the Republican primaries to Texas governor George W. Bush. In that election, McCain had openly positioned himself as an ideologically unorthodox reformer who could attract broad appeal among independents and Democrats. While this persona won McCain considerable support outside his party, boosting him to a victory over Bush in the New Hampshire primary (where independents are permitted to participate under state law), it proved less popular among the Republican electoral base, which ultimately preferred Bush's "compassionate conservative" candidacy.

Previous Republican nomination contests similarly inspired vigorous internal debate over the conservative credentials of the candidates—including 1976, when Ronald Reagan nearly succeeded in winning the presidential nomination as a right-wing alternative to incumbent Gerald Ford; 1980, when Reagan prevailed over more moderate rivals George H. W. Bush and Howard Baker; 1988, when a more conservative Bush, running as Reagan's second-in-command and political heir, labeled rival Bob Dole a "straddler" for, unlike Bush, refusing to rule out supporting tax increases; and 1992, when Bush senior, having agreed to raise taxes himself in a 1990 deficit reduction compromise, faced an energetic challenge from protest candidate Pat Buchanan. Though specific candidates and issues have changed over the years, several key attributes have remained relatively constant. Republican presidential candidates explicitly sell themselves to their party's primary electorate as ideological conservatives who seek the presidency in order to uphold their timeless principles. When rivals are criticized, it is nearly always for supposed disloyalty to the conservative cause. Republican candidates seldom argue that they deserve nomination based on their electability in a general election; when they do, they tend to cite the candidate's record of previous electoral

success. Few Republicans assume an inevitable tradeoff between ideological purity and potential vote share, as would be predicted by familiar Downsian models of partisan competition (Buchler 2015).

As a rule, Democrats run for their party's nomination very differently. Abstract ideological language is far less prevalent on the Democratic side; few candidates explicitly claim to be liberals (or "progressives") or express devotion to the "cause of liberalism" or "liberal principles." Candidates wishing to position themselves to the left of their opponents speak instead of *party* loyalty, such as the frequently-repeated quotation attributed to the late senator Paul Wellstone that he represented "the Democratic wing of the Democratic Party"—a quip that was a particular favorite of former Vermont governor Howard Dean when he sought the Democratic nomination in 2004.

Candidacies like Dean's, which attempt to attract voter support via implicit claims of ideological purity, have little track record of success in Democratic presidential primaries (with the exception of George McGovern in 1972, who had the benefit of a superior grasp of the post-reform strategic environment compared to his opponents). Dean's campaign resembled similar efforts by Paul Simon in 1988, Jerry Brown in 1992, and Bill Bradley in 2000 (and, later, Dennis Kucinich in 2008) to combine rhetoric suggesting left-wing policy commitments with a visible distaste for the messy pragmatism of real-world politics. Yet the affluent white liberals who are most attracted to such candidacies do not alone represent a large enough segment of the Democratic Party to deliver the nomination—even within the low-turnout, high-sophistication electorates that participate in presidential primaries and supply much of the party's organizational and financial backing.

Unlike on the Republican side, Democratic candidates can successfully cite electability as a justification for departing from liberal orthodoxy. "Don't just send them a message, send them a president," argued John Kerry in 2004 to primary voters while competing against Dean, implying

that Democrats should channel their anger at George W. Bush into supporting a candidate who could defeat Bush in a general election. Indeed, much of Kerry's appeal among the Democratic electorate that ultimately nominated him reflected his status as a decorated Navy combat veteran, which supposedly gave him the credentials and standing to effectively challenge Bush's national security policies in a time of war. Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign was similarly premised on the view that only a moderate southern nominee gave the Democratic Party a chance of victory after three consecutive landslide defeats—an argument that allowed Clinton to capture the nomination despite his personal foibles and visible distance from the party's liberal wing. Jimmy Carter made a similar case for his own successful Democratic candidacy in 1976.

In 2008, initial Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton faced challenges from former senator and vice presidential nominee John Edwards and eventual nominee Barack Obama. All three candidates appeared at a forum organized by liberal online activists, but they disagreed less about ideological purity than over which groups each candidate best represented. Obama and Edwards critiqued Clinton for her claim that “lobbyists... represent real Americans... They represent nurses, they represent social workers, yes, they represent corporations that employ a lot of people” (Smith 2007). Although Clinton was the early leader in party endorsements, she was never able to consolidate support across party factions. Edwards positioned himself to the left of his rivals, but did so by using the tried-and-true Democratic Party approach of promising to represent regular Americans against the interests of the powerful. After Edwards' departure from the race, Obama became the preferred candidate of liberals, even though his positions did not differ appreciably from Clinton's on most domestic policy issues. Instead of employing sharply ideological rhetoric, Obama preferred a more inclusive message of “hope” and “change” that portrayed him as a unifying figure rather than the leader of a single partisan or ideological cause.

Obama's ultimate success in capturing the 2008 Democratic nomination mainly reflected his ability to assemble a group coalition uniting African-Americans, young people, and anti-war voters. The overwhelming rates of electoral support that Obama received among black voters—often equaling or exceeding 90%—allowed him to win lopsided proportions of delegates in most states with significant African-American populations, beginning with the key South Carolina primary in late January. (Bill Clinton unsuccessfully tried to minimize Obama's victory by portraying him as the heir of Jesse Jackson, who had also consolidated support from African-Americans in the 1980s, but Obama's appeal to white voters significantly exceeded Jackson's.) While white women collectively supported Hillary Clinton over Obama, she failed to attract an equally decisive proportion of their votes despite endorsements from prominent feminists such as Gloria Steinem and Eleanor Smeal. Obama's narrow victory over Clinton in 2008 demonstrated that popularity among ideologically-motivated liberal activists can be a valuable asset in a competitive Democratic race, but is alone insufficient to win the nomination without an additional reservoir of support from other mass party constituencies.

Partisan asymmetry in the content of primary campaigns is visible at the congressional level as well, as illustrated by a comparison of the 2014 primary campaigns to represent Michigan's 8th Congressional district. On the Republican side, Mike Bishop, who had served in the Michigan state Senate from 2007-2010, faced off against Tom McMillin, who had served in the state House from 2009-2014. McMillin criticized Bishop's pre-2009 legislative accomplishments, all of which had required the support of the state's Democratic governor, as revealing his insufficient conservatism. Bishop, in turn, attacked most of the post-2010 legislation that had passed with McMillin's support (even though it was signed by the Republican governor). Both candidates had accumulated similar legislative records, so they each tarred their opponent by associating them with whatever had passed

in the short windows when only their opponent was serving in the legislature. They ran on opposition to governing, not on their achievements.

The four Democratic candidates (an economist, a social work professor, an attorney known for his sponsorship of marijuana legalization, and a county treasurer) decided to hold a joint press conference to publicize their candidacies. They then agreed to hold a series of joint candidate forums (careful not to label them debates) sponsored by various advocacy groups. They each highlighted unique top concerns, but went out of their way to signal their agreement with other candidates. The low-key primary was partially a product of the Democrat's slim likelihood of general election victory, even for an open seat that Obama had won by 7% in 2008 and lost by 3% in 2012. The top Democratic candidates did compete against one another behind the scenes, but mostly for the endorsements of local unions and advocacy groups.

Most primary campaigns in both parties, of course, are foregone conclusions as the incumbent or party favorite cruises to victory. When contested, however, Democratic primaries are usually efforts to construct a coalition of supporters among the party's constituent social groups (often with the aid of elite organizational endorsements). Republican primaries are near uniformly battles for the mantle of conservatism; the campaigns do not always involve the same issues and the most conservative candidate may not succeed, but serious candidates must convince Republican voters that they are faithful members of the conservative movement.

Party Presentation in General Elections

The asymmetry between Democrats and Republicans extends to general election campaigns. Democrats remain more likely to explicitly emphasize group ties and interests, as well as specific policy positions designed to appeal to these groups. Republicans prefer to cite more general themes, especially conservative ideas about limited government, and attributes of personal character such as

strong leadership and moral qualities. These distinctive approaches not only work to mobilize each party's loyal electoral base, but also maximize the relative persuasive capacity of each side, due to the broader American public's simultaneous preference for symbolic conservatism and operational liberalism.

As Figure 9 illustrates, the national party platforms that serve as substantive and rhetorical summaries of the presidential candidates' philosophies and policy proposals reflect this asymmetry. Republican platforms devote significantly more space to language concerning the general size and scope of government; Democratic platforms are more likely to emphasize specific policies and cite particular social groups. This pattern holds among all platforms since 1920, as well as for the post-1980 period in which party officeholders and candidates have become more ideologically polarized.

[Figure 9 here]

Presidential candidates also systematically differ by party in the extent to which their rhetoric emphasizes general ideological themes or specific policy problems. In presidential debates, as Table 6 shows, Democratic candidates are more likely to discuss specific social problems, just as Republican nominees prefer to speak about the general size and scope of government. Once elected, according to an analysis by Julia Azari (2014), Republican presidents are more likely to claim an electoral mandate in general and to employ "responsible party" rhetoric (*i.e.* assertions that the electorate has placed political power in the hands of a single party in order to enact its agenda), even though Democratic presidents are more likely to claim a mandate on behalf of particular policies.

[Table 6 here]

Presidential candidates exhibit other rhetorical differences as well. As Figure 10 demonstrates, Democratic candidates are slightly more likely than Republicans to refer to parties and voters in their campaign speeches (using data in Jarvis 2004). Republicans, however, are significantly more likely to employ more general themes of liberty and patriotism. General conservative rhetoric

is not limited to explicit references to ideology, but extends to broader themes that connect the symbolic and value-laden principles of limited government and American exceptionalism.

[Figure 10 here]

The presidential nominees of the two parties also differ with respect to their propensity to refer to economic class in their public speeches. Figure 13 shows that Democrats are more likely to invoke class than Republicans at each social stratum, but that this gap increases as one moves from the lower to the upper class. Democrats frequently attempt to win support by describing their policy program as furthering the interests of the middle class or “working men and women” while assailing Republican policies for supposedly benefiting the privileged few. Candidates in both parties have increasingly adopted class-based rhetoric over time, but Republicans remain largely silent about the rich and Democrats have consistently referred more to all classes (Rhodes and Johnson 2015).

[Figure 13 here]

We find a similar pattern of asymmetry in the messages contained in paid advertising sponsored by candidates for presidential and congressional office. Table 7 summarizes two measures of the use of ideology in federal campaign advertising: from 2000-2004, researchers measured candidates’ relative emphasis on ideology and personal values compared to policy issues; from 2010-2012, they specifically counted mentions of liberal and conservative ideological labels in campaign advertisements (see Fowler, Franz, and Ridout forthcoming). Republican candidates not only consistently use the terms “liberal” and “conservative” in their advertising far more than Democratic candidates, but they also disproportionately focus on general ideology in comparison to specific issues.

[Table 7 here]

Party differences in advertising are long-standing. John Henderson (2013) has collected data from a large sample of 40 years of television advertisements in congressional campaigns. Henderson

reports the percent of advertisements that include references to three issues related to the size and scope of government (budget, taxes, and big government). As Figure 14 shows, Republican candidates are more than twice as likely as Democrats, on average, to focus on issues concerning the general size of government. The proportion of Republican ads that complain about big government, in particular, has doubled since 1976 (Henderson 2013). Democratic advertising, in contrast, is more likely to emphasize specific policy problems and issues; we report the average emphasis across 13 issues (entitlements, environment, health, education, crime, inflation, welfare, drugs, economy, defense, trade, guns, and transportation).¹ Even though Republicans maintain a consistent advantage in general performance measures on national security, their ads are not significantly more likely to emphasize foreign policy. Democratic advertising was also more likely to cite specific social groups; we report the average across big business, small business, police, children, middle class, and elderly. Democrats emphasized both their own social group ties and those attributed to Republicans.

[Figure 14 here]

Congressional campaign consultants in each party hold somewhat different opinions on how candidates should focus their campaigns, as summarized in Table 8 (updated from Grossmann 2009). Both parties' strategists recommend that campaign messages focus on three issues, though Democratic consultants are more open to a wider focus. Democratic consultants are more likely to advise a focus on local issues, whereas Republican consultants prefer nationalizing the campaign. Democratic consultants also feel more favorably about advertising that directly compares candidates' issue positions. In interviews, Republican consultants often report that voters interpret discussions of campaign policy issues as clues to candidates' broader values and character, rather than discrete position statements designed to appeal to particular constituencies.

¹ Categorizing taxes as a specific problem rather than a concern with the size of government changes the party averages to reduce the differences between the parties, but does not change the relative emphasis of each party.

[Table 8 here]

Advertising differences are also apparent in presidential campaigns. Figure 13 summarizes the citation of social, political, and ideological groups in candidate advertising in the 2008 presidential election (based on data from Rhodes and Johnson 2014). It reveals that Barack Obama's advertising was much more likely to contain references to groups—especially social groups—than ads sponsored by the John McCain campaign. Obama was also more likely to cite political groups, such as lobbyists or corporations, in a negative context, reflecting the common Democratic strategy of portraying political conflict as a battle of competing interests. For example, Obama's television ad titled "Real Change," first aired on September 12, 2008, featured the candidate himself stating that "to me, change is a government that doesn't let banks and oil companies rip off the American people . . . Change is giving tax breaks to middle-class families instead of companies that send jobs overseas" (*New York Times* 2008).

[Figure 13 here]

The distinct images that each party presents to voters also arise in the design of candidate websites. Table 9 reports several characteristics of the average website of Republican and Democratic candidates for Congress (from Druckman, Kifer, and Parkin 2009). On average, Democratic websites discuss more policy positions, actions, and legislation, though the differences are slight. They present their issue discussion more prominently on the front page, but are less likely to talk about their general sentiments toward government or the need for general reform. The big differences are in the candidates' relationships to groups. Democratic candidates highlight 50% more endorsements on their campaign websites. They are also much more likely to emphasize their advocacy for social groups and constituencies.

[Table 9 here]

The content of the last two presidential campaigns provides a useful illustration of how the parties rely on their different strengths, based on their unique compositions, to appeal to voters. In 2008, Barack Obama combined the (traditional out-party) message of change, attacks on George W. Bush's economic record, and identity-based appeals of new generational leadership and the historic chance to elect the first African-American president. He also offered more targeted issue appeals based on a claim of policy moderation: one television ad literally displayed an issue spectrum, with Obama's own health care plan placed in the median position between two extremes. John McCain chose conservative firebrand Sarah Palin as his running mate, who repeatedly attacked Obama in ideological terms for his desire to transform America and his insufficient patriotism. After Obama told a constituent "when you spread the wealth around, it's good for everybody," McCain declared it evidence of a commitment to socialism, repeatedly invoking the constituent (whom he named "Joe the Plumber") and assailing Obama for his redistributionist agenda.

The 2012 Obama campaign was heavily focused on Mitt Romney's wealth and associated lack of empathy, with Obama's most heavily-run ads criticizing Romney's foreign bank accounts and his characterization of 47% of Americans as "dependent on government." Romney made the task easier with a series of gaffes, saying that he was "not concerned about the very poor" and citing his enjoyment in being able to "fire people." Obama's positive message was focused on his long list of policy achievements and proposals, including at least one targeted at every party constituency. Bill Clinton's wonky convention speech methodically compared each Obama policy with a more extreme Republican position. Romney focused on criticizing Obama's agenda as a failed attempt at a government takeover of the economy (especially on health care). Rather than policy proposals, Romney focused on his own record of economic management. On foreign policy, Romney criticized Obama for going on an "apology tour," criticizing America, and showing "weakness." Republicans

extended symbolic critiques to domestic issues, dedicating a night of their convention to Obama's statements about how business owners are helped by society as evidence of his belief in collectivism.

Even in general elections, where both parties have incentives to reach the same voters, they employ distinct strategies. Republicans focus on broad values and ideology, rather than their specific (less popular) policy proposals. Republican elites tend to reject the idea that candidates are competing to attract the median voter on a spectrum of combined issue positions (Buchler 2015). They instead prefer models that emphasize directional choices between liberal and conservative opposite poles and believe that voters reward a consistent broad viewpoint, especially one based on limited government. When Republicans do discuss specific policies, Henderson (2013) reports that they disproportionately portray their record as more centrist than it is; Democrats have only slight tendencies to exaggerate their issue position moderation. Republicans' asymmetric polarization in Congress has therefore not been reflected in campaign advertisements. Democrats face less difficulty in matching the issue positions of their constituency groups with those of the broader electorate, but they encounter more opposition to their broader vision of government.

Electoral Competition Between Unmatched Sides

The ideological focus of the Republican Party and the social group coalition structure of the Democratic Party, which we see as the primary asymmetry between American political parties, play large roles in American elections. Democrats' relative emphases on group-based and specific-issue appeals tied to their organized constituencies are apparent in both primary and general elections. Battles for Republican Party nominations are instead fought over ideological commitment. Even in general elections, Republican candidates use broader, symbolic messages primarily based on principles of limited government. Both parties are able to match the focus of their party members with the broader electorate. Democrats can provide specialized messages to party constituencies

while appealing to the public on the basis of rhetorical identification with the common people over the privileged as well as the popularity of their specific positions. Republicans can both mobilize their base and take advantage of general conservative sentiment in the national electorate using appeals to broad conservative values draped in symbolic American imagery.

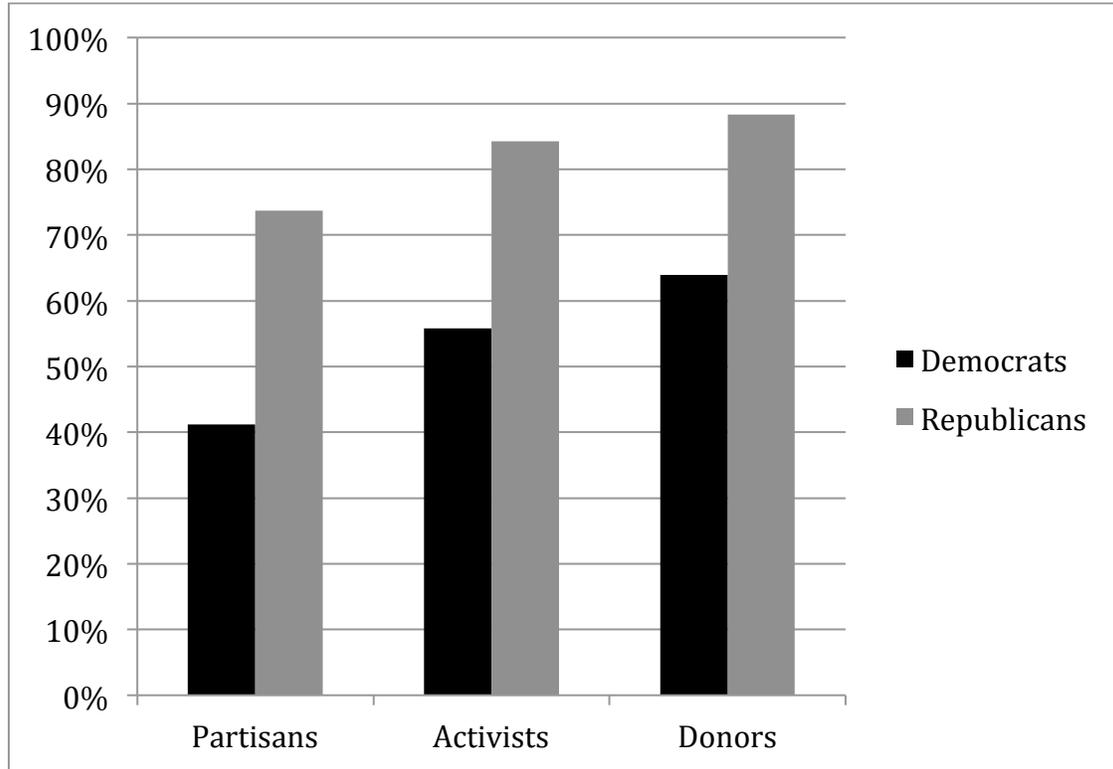
The extended Republican Party has developed and popularized a broad ideology that unites its electoral and activist base. Its core tendencies have only been enhanced by decades-long trends in partisan and ideological polarization among politicians, activists, interest groups, and voters. Republicans see politics as a battle between left and right over the size and scope of government (Grossmann and Hopkins 2015). They also view that broad battle as the one they are best poised to win. Both their internal conflicts and their public presentations in general elections reflect their existential and strategic focus on this conflict of visions.

The extended network of the Democratic Party is shaped by its internal diversity, matching organized activists and interest groups with each party constituency. Democrats not only perceive politics as a battle between social groups, but also seek to enact their vision by compiling discrete minorities into a unified coalition to oppose powerful interests allied with Republicans. Ideological liberals have always represented one group among many in the Democratic fold (in the New Deal coalition, they were viewed as the small social group of intellectuals). It is possible that partisan and ideological polarization will enhance liberals' role in their party, but that role is limited by both Democrats' objective electoral incentives and their subjective view that extremism endangers the party's electability. The result is a programmatic party that retains strong and broad links to social groups.

American elections are closely fought contests between only two parties, the most limited competitive landscape in the developed world. Each party must therefore assemble broad popular support, but they use different methods to do so. Both the Democrats and Republicans hold distinct

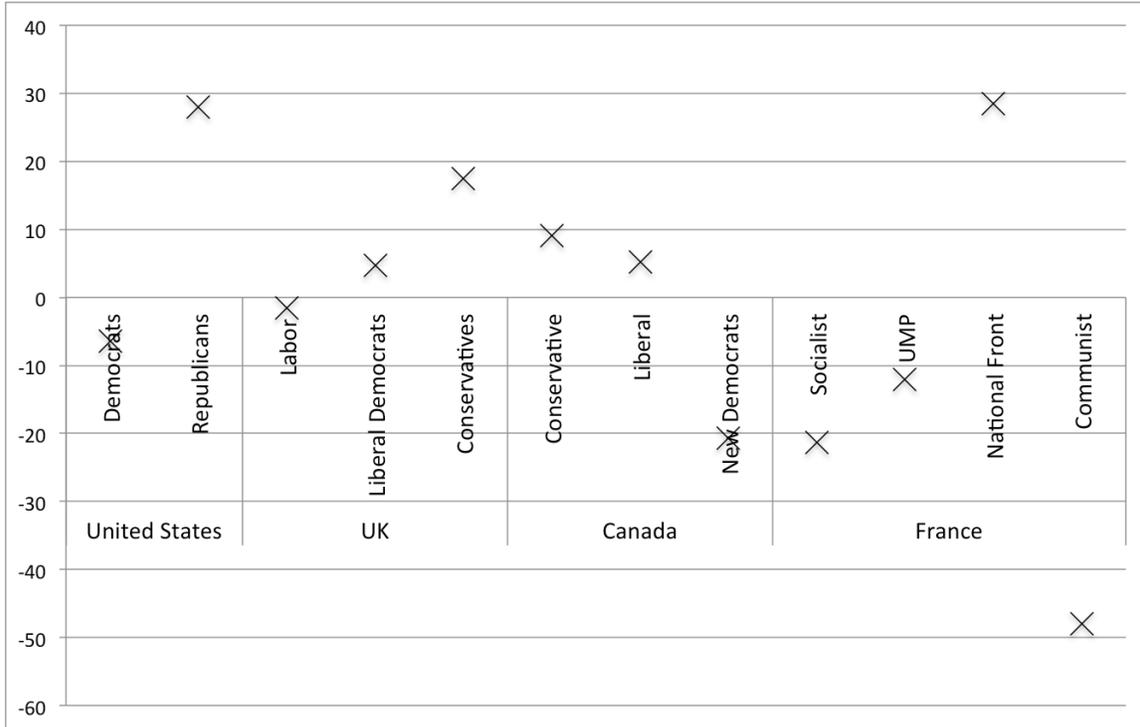
advantages—and disadvantages—in mobilizing their loyal supporters and appealing to the wider electorate, producing an enduring difference in the nature and style of their electoral campaigns.

Figure 1: Percent Self-Identifying as Conservative (Republicans) or Liberal (Democrats)



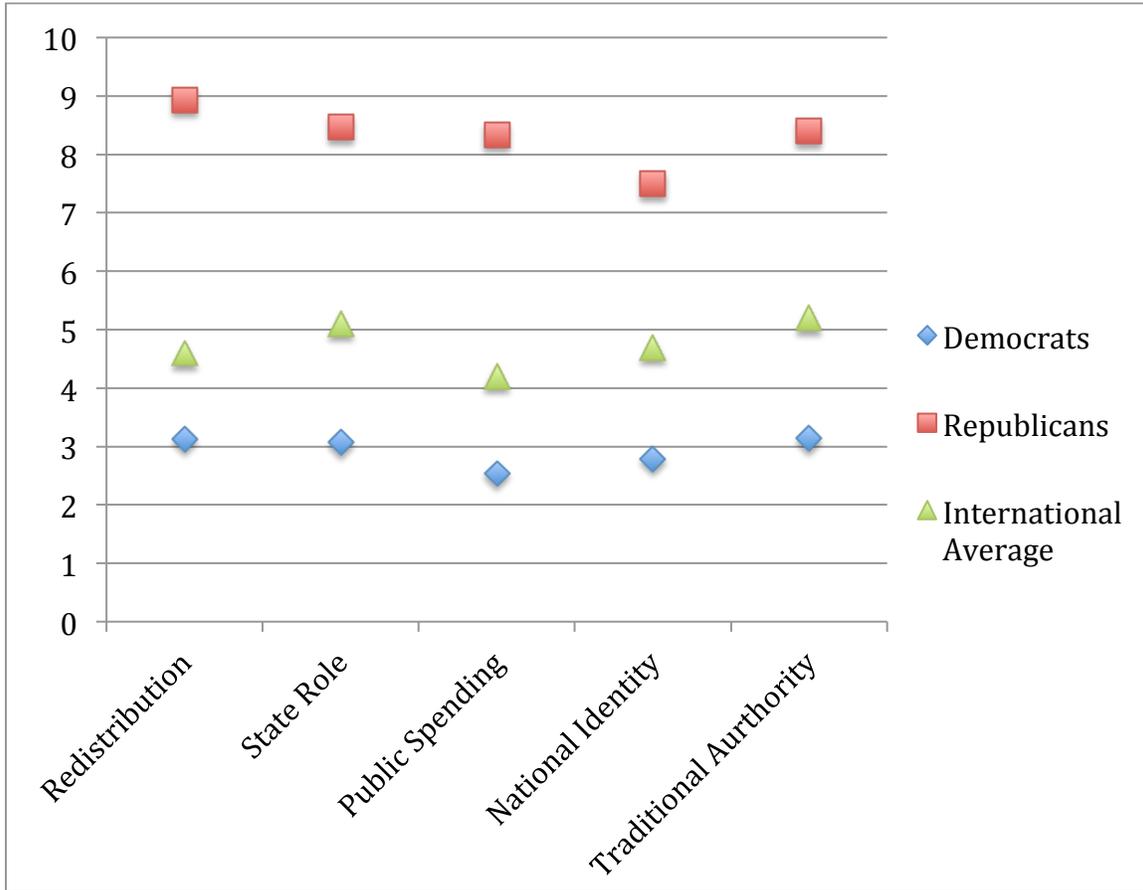
The figure reports the percent of members of the Democratic and Republican parties who identify as liberals (for the Democrats) and conservatives (for the Republicans) as well as the percent among partisans who reported two or more campaign activities (activists) and among those that reported donating money to political causes (donors). Data come from the 2012 American National Election Studies.

Figure 2: Comparative Ideological Placement of American Political Parties



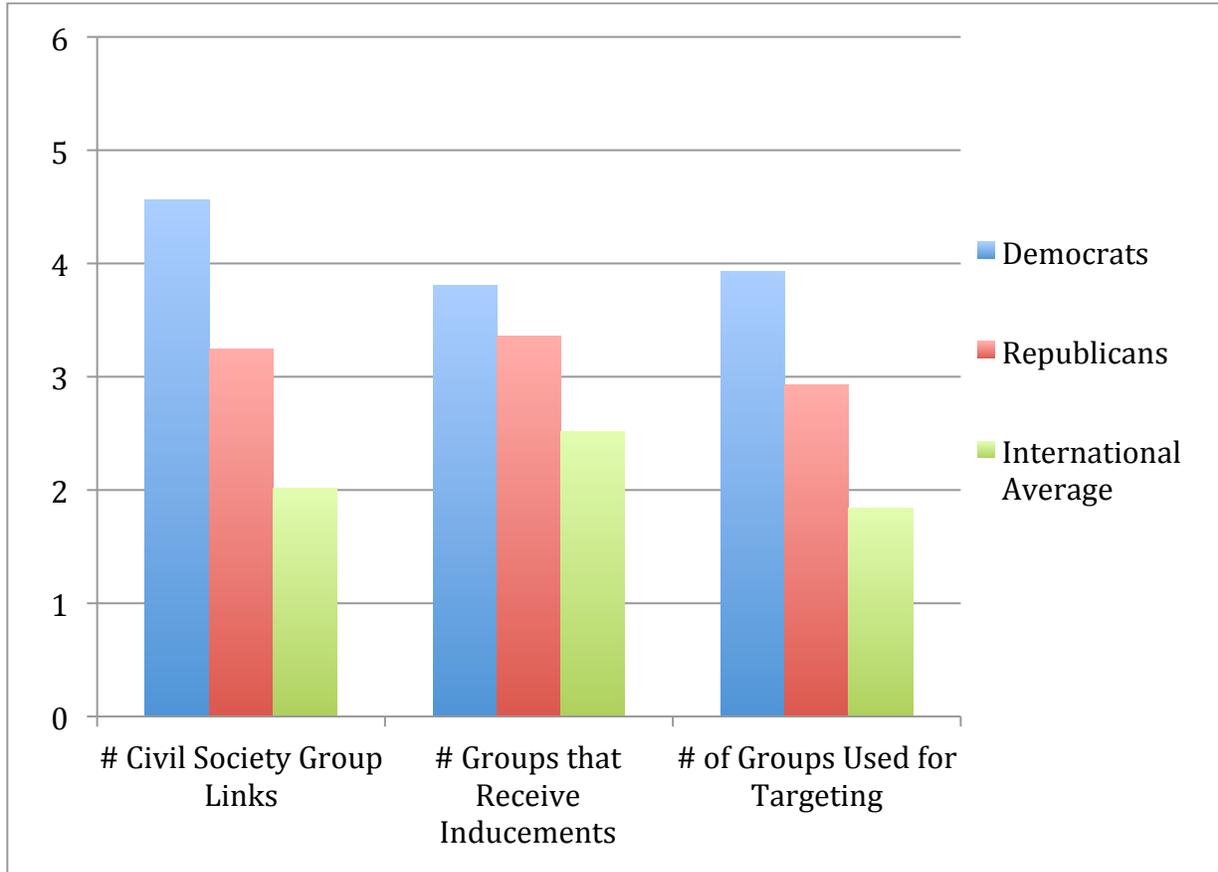
The figure reports the conservative (high) or liberal (low) placement of the political parties based on the rhetoric in their party platforms. The data uses the most recent platforms and is based on a content analysis conducted by the Comparative Manifestos Project.

Figure 3: Ideological Placement of American Political Parties on Several Dimensions



The figure reports the conservative (high) or liberal (low) placement of the political parties based on expert coding. The Republican Party has the highest average conservatism of any party in the world. The data is based on a survey of experts in 88 countries conducted in 2008-2009 by Herbert Kitschelt and made available via the Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project dataset.

Figure 4: Political Party Linkages with Social Groups



The figure reports the number of social groups (out of 6) where political parties have linkages to related civil society groups, where political parties provide target inducements, and where political parties connect with organizations to target constituencies. The Democratic Party has the broadest social linkages of any developed world political party, with connections to unions, business, religious, ethnic, geographic and gender groups. The data is based on a survey of experts in 88 countries conducted in 2008-2009 by Herbert Kitschelt and made available via the Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project dataset.

Table 1: Organizational Memberships of Convention Delegates

	Democrats	Republicans
<i>2008 National Convention Delegates</i>		
Political Memberships Per Delegate	1.22	0.9
Total # of Organizations Mentioned	238	184
Degree-Degree Correlation	0.353	0.101
Identity Organizations as % of Total	29%	20.1%
Ideological Organizations as % of Total	4.6%	8.7%
<i>1980 State Convention Delegates</i>		
Interest Group Memberships	1.57	1.06

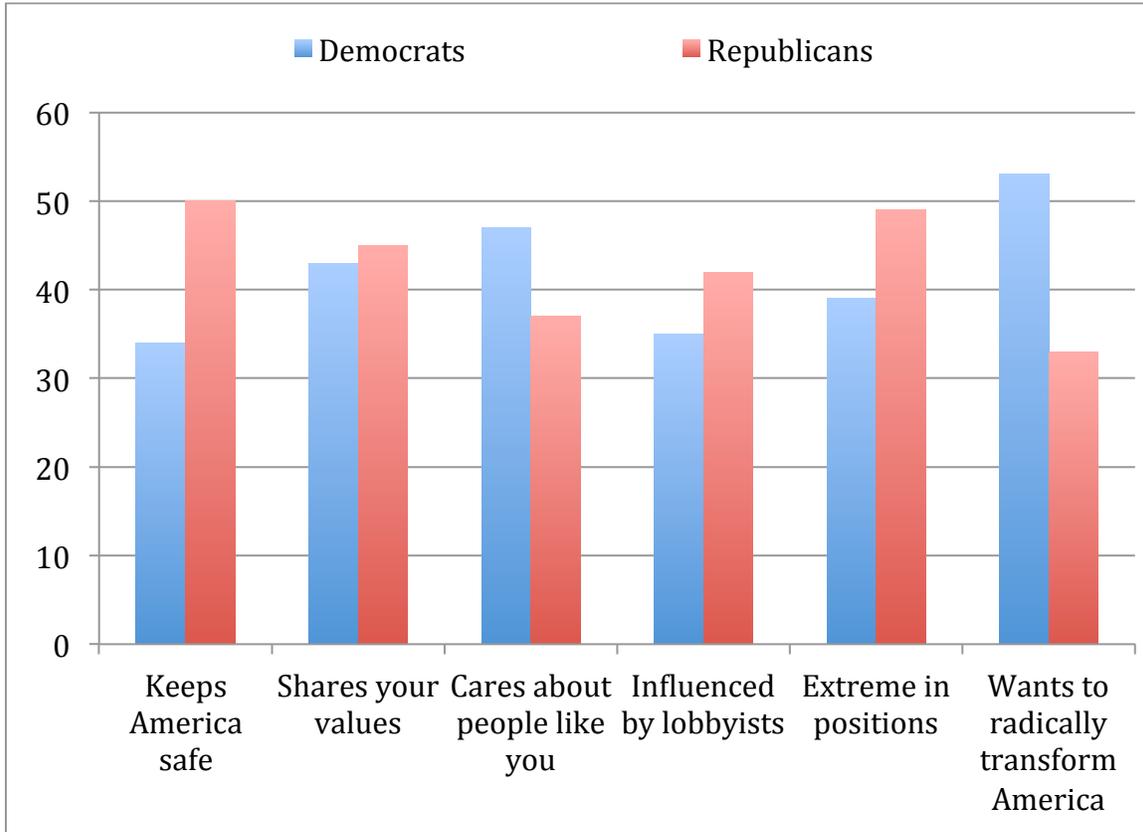
*The table reports differences between the two political parties' 2008 convention delegates, as reported in a survey of convention delegates by Seth Masket, Michael Heaney, Joanne Miller, and Dara Strolovitch. Degree-degree correlation measures the hierarchical concentration of organizational memberships (with higher numbers closer to 1 indicating that membership ties are less concentrated in a small number of organizations). The comparison from 1980 state convention delegates is based on information collected by Ronald Rapoport, Alan Abramowitz, and John McGlennon and reported in *The Life of the Parties*. More information is available at: <http://bit.ly/M9vPUs>*

Table 2: Shared Mailing Lists within Extended Party Networks

	Democrats	Republicans
Organizations in Extended Party Network	183	70
Mailing List Ties Between Organizations	318	96
Linked Interest Groups	44	7
Most Central Organizations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Americans for Democratic Action 2. American Prospect 3. Sierra Club 4. People for the American Way 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Human Events 2. National Review 3. Weekly Standard 4. Republican National Committee

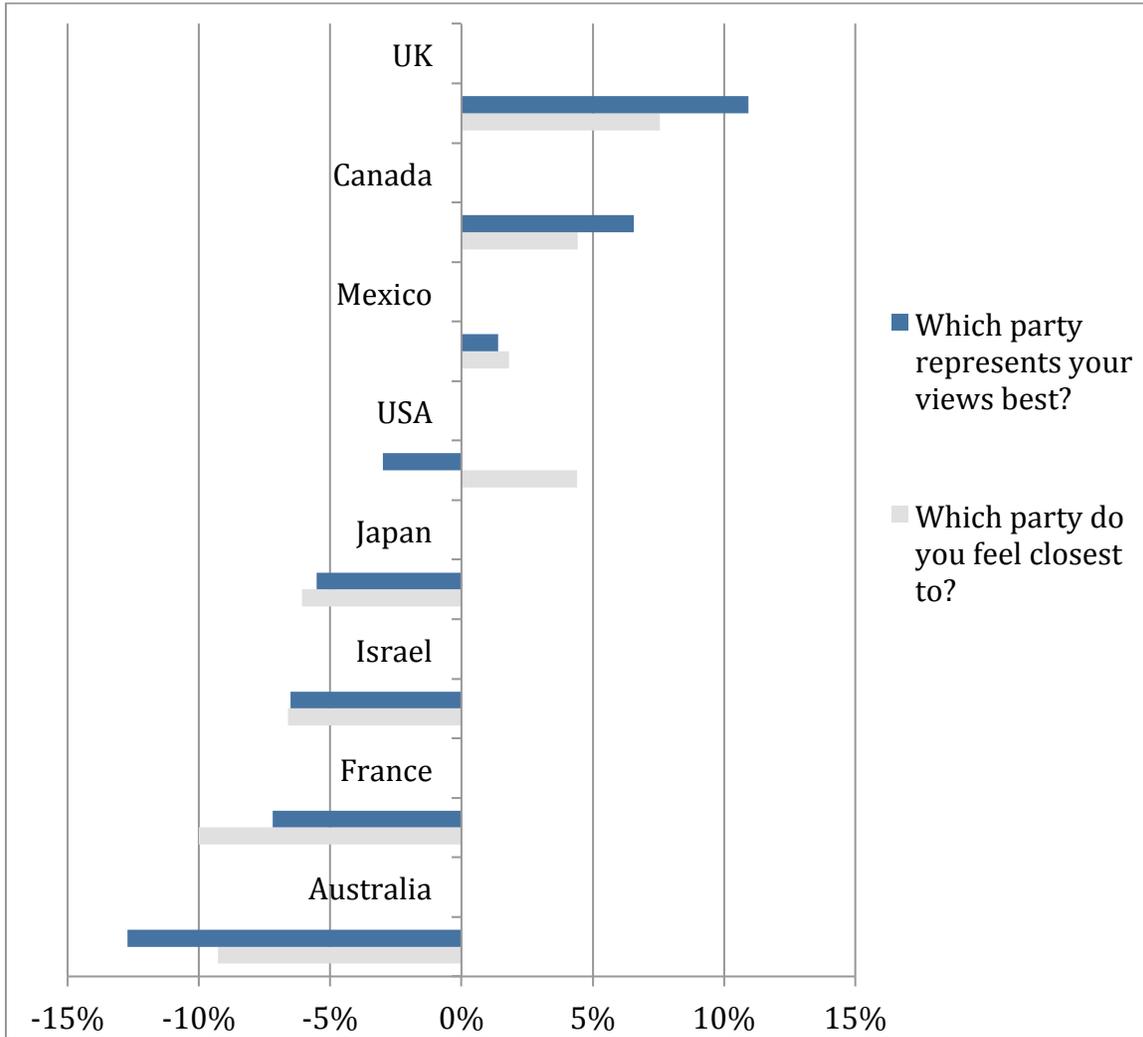
The table reports differences between the two political parties' extended networks, as revealed by mailing list exchanges between organizations. Gregory Koger, Seth Masket, and Hans Noel collected these data by making donations to political organizations and candidates in different assumed names and tracking the other solicitations they received. The linked interest groups are those that were part of one of three party factions in each political party. The information reported here is provided in "Partisan Webs" and "Cooperative Party Factions in American Politics."

Figure 5: Party Reputations



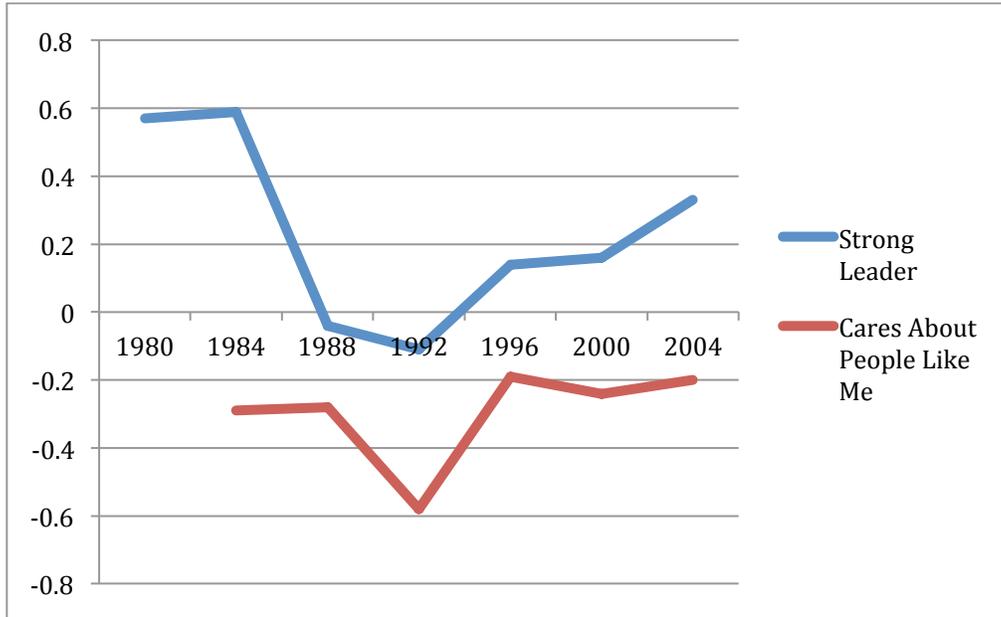
The figure reports the percentage of Americans who report that each party fits each description. The results are from the 2014 Pre-election American Values Survey conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute and made available at: <http://publicreligion.org/research/2014/09/survey-economic-insecurity-rising-inequality-and-doubts-about-the-future-findings-from-the-2014-american-values-survey/>

Figure 6: Center-Left Party Advantage on Feeling Close and Representing Views



The figure reports the difference in the percent of each country's respondents who choose the center-left party versus the center-right party on two different survey questions: one asking which party best represents your views and one asking which party you feel closest to. Positive numbers indicate a better performance for the center-left party (the Democrats in the USA) and negative numbers indicate a better performance for the center-right party (the Republicans in the USA). The data is from the 2nd wave of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems and is made available at: <http://www.cses.org/>

Figure 7: Republican Party Advantage (Disadvantage) in Candidate Traits



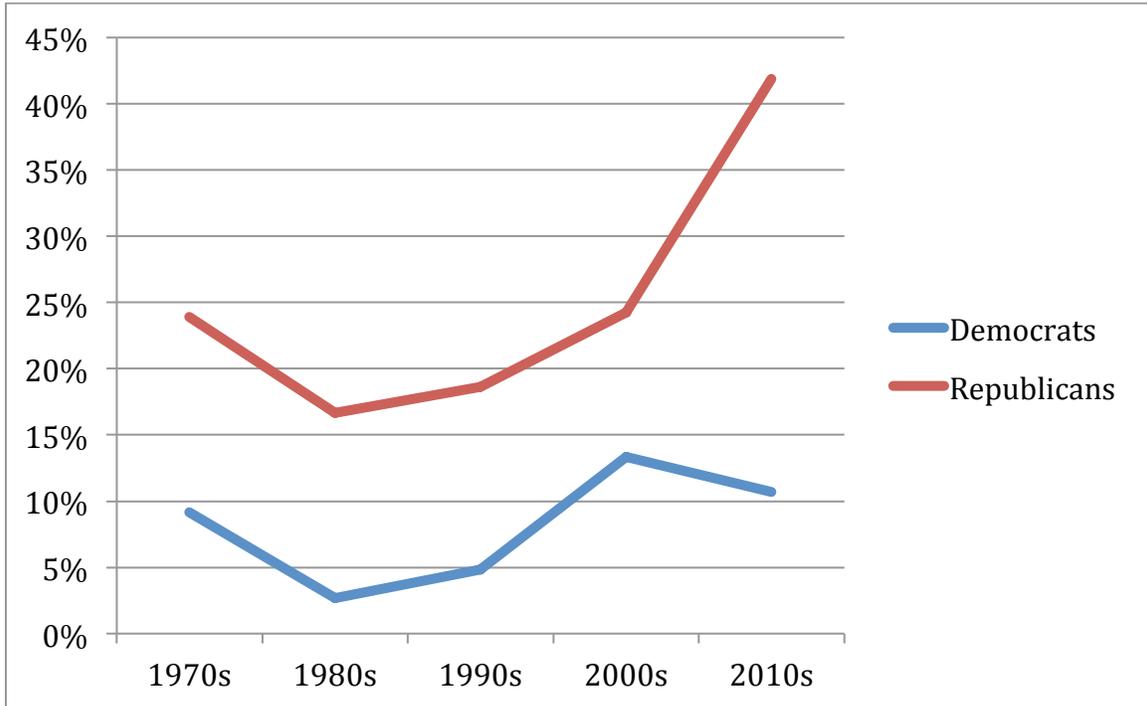
The figure reports the difference in average ratings on a 1 to 4 scale between the Republican and Democratic presidential candidates ratings on being a “strong leader” and “cares about people like you.” The data originate in the American National Elections Studies and were summarized in Danny Hayes, “A Theory of Trait Ownership.”

Table 3: Republican Party Advantage (Disadvantage) on Consensus Issue Areas

	Republican Advantage
domestic security	14.5%
military	13.9%
immigration	8.5%
Inflation	8.5%
crime	6.6%
foreign affairs	6%
education	-10.4%
jobs	-12%
health care	-12.4%
Social Security	-14.4%
environment	-17.8%
poverty	-18.1%

The figure reports the average percent Republican Party advantage on dealing with each issue from the 1970s-2000s as estimated by Patrick Egan in Partisan Priorities.

Figure 8: Percent of Ideological Primary Challenges to Congressional Candidates



*The figure reports the percent of primary challenges to congressional candidates that were on the basis of ideology (with the challenger avowedly more extreme than the legislator) in each party from 1970-2014. The data was collected by Robert Boatright, reported in *Getting Primaried*, and updated in "The 2014 Congressional Primaries in Context." Boatright directly provided the raw data.*

Table 4: National Interest Groups Endorsing Pre-Primary Congressional Candidates

	Democratic Candidates		Republican Candidates	
	#	% of Total	#	% of Total
Economic	282	63.2	120	51.1
Identity	70	15.7	28	11.9
Single-Issue	69	15.5	62	26.4
Ideological	25	5.6	25	10.6

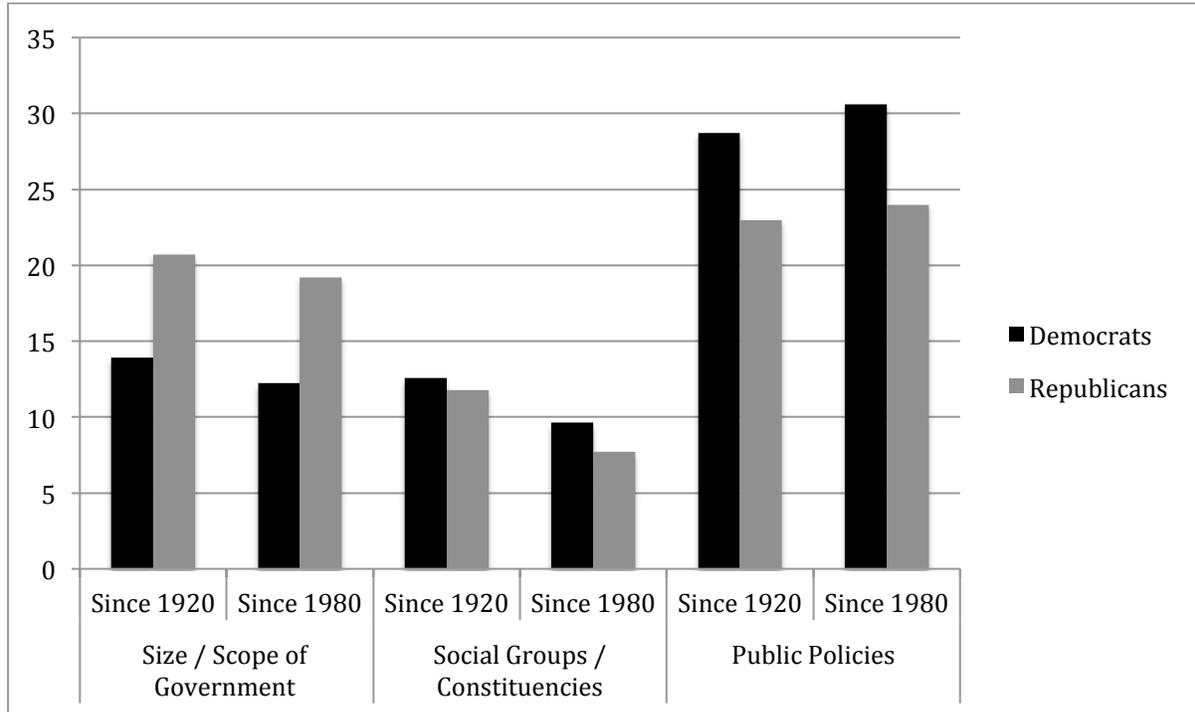
The table reports the number and proportion of national interest groups endorsing candidates of each political party in each category. The data stem from an analysis by Casey Dominguez of the 2002 Congressional elections.

Table 5: Districts where Minority Candidates Run and Hold Office by Partisanship

	2000 State Legislative Officeholders Nationwide		2012 Candidates in States with High Minority Populations	
	Democratic Minorities	Republican Minorities	Democratic Minorities	Republican Minorities
Minority Districts	82.3%	40.6%	59.8%	43.6%
Mixed Districts	14.5%	25.0%	35.7%	46.4%
White Districts	3.2%	34.4%	4.5%	10.0%

The table reports the percent of minority candidates and officeholders that represent majority-minority districts, mixed districts (<75% white), and white districts. Data are from coding by Eric Gonzales Juenke.

Figure 9: Percent of Platforms Dedicated to Discussion of Ideology, Groups, and Policy



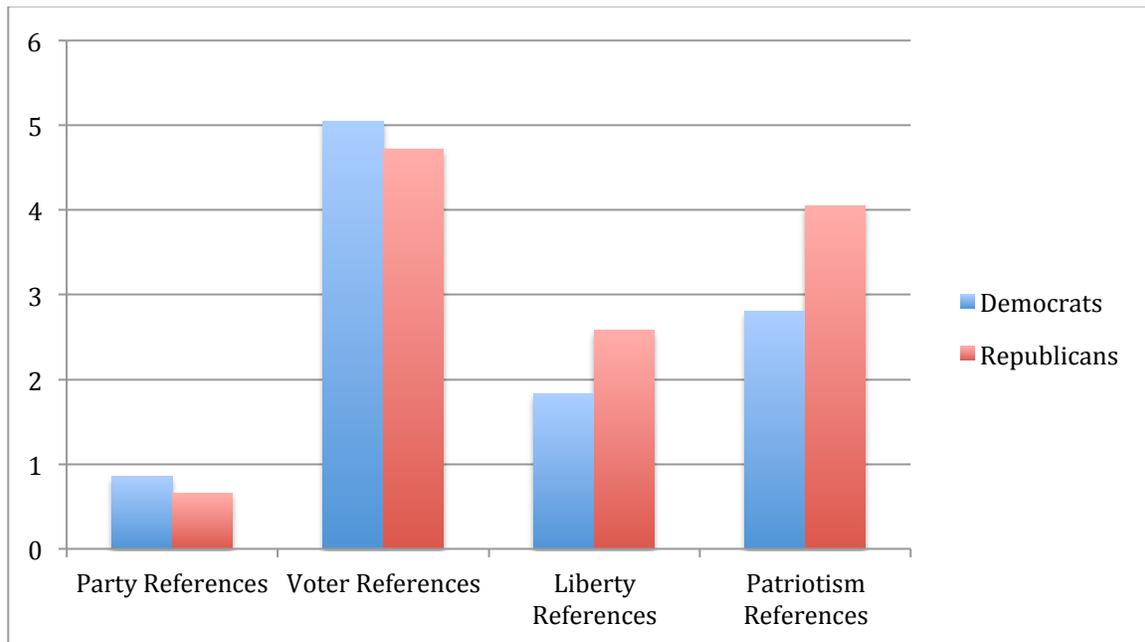
The figure reports the percent of the Democratic and Republican party platforms that were dedicated to discussions of ideology (the size and scope of government), social groups (or specific constituencies), and public policy (current or future proposals) in all presidential elections since 1920 and only those since 1980. Some discussions were mixed or fit into none of these three aggregate categories. These data were compiled from sentence-level hand coding of party platforms by the Comparative Manifestos Project. The ideological indicator includes categories 203, 204, 301-305, 401, and 412-414. The social group indicator includes categories 701 and 704-706. The policies indicator includes categories 402-404, 401, 504-507, 605, 606, and 703. More information is available at: <https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/>.

Table 6: Party Differences in Campaign Rhetoric

		Democratic Presidents	Republican Presidents
Presidential Debates	Social Problems	42	26.6
	Size and Scope of Government	41.4	52.8
Presidential Speeches	Electoral Mandate Claims	9%	12%
	Policies With Claimed Mandate	5.25	2.4
	Responsible Party Rhetoric	6.9%	10.8%

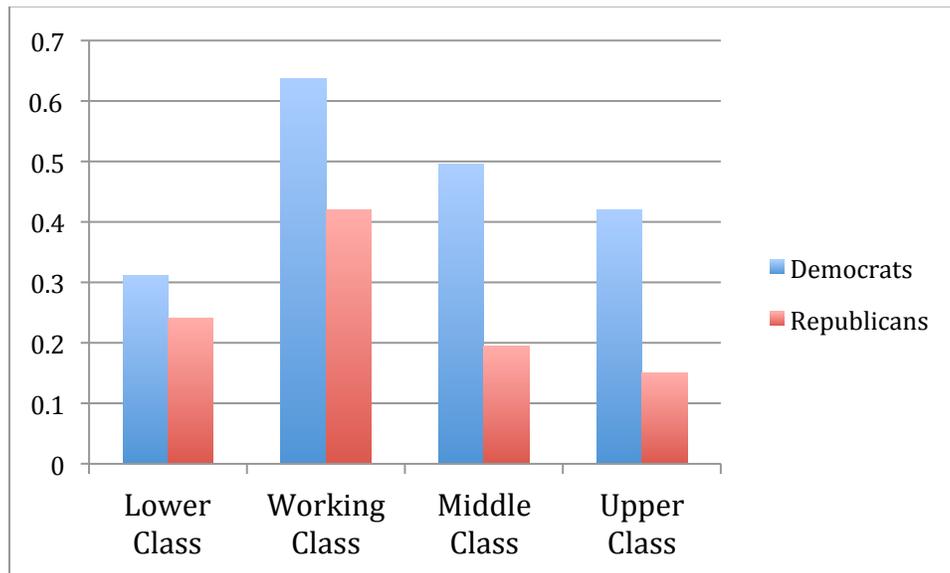
*The table reports data from two different projects. First, we report the average number of mentions of social problems and governing ideology (the size or scope of government) by Democratic and Republican candidates in presidential debates since 1996. These data stem from an original content analysis by our graduate student of the first presidential debate of each election year. Second, we report the average percent of presidential communications that claim an electoral mandate and the average number of specific policies that presidents claim they have a mandate to achieve as well as the amount of responsible party rhetoric deployed. The data is from Julia Azari, *Delivering the People's Message*.*

Figure 10: References to Campaign Actors and Themes in Presidential Campaign Speeches



The figure reports the number of references to specific actors and themes in presidential campaign speeches from 1948-2000. The data originates from Sharon Jarvis, "Partisan patterns in presidential campaign speeches, 1948-2000."

Figure 11: References to Class Groups in Presidential Campaign Speeches



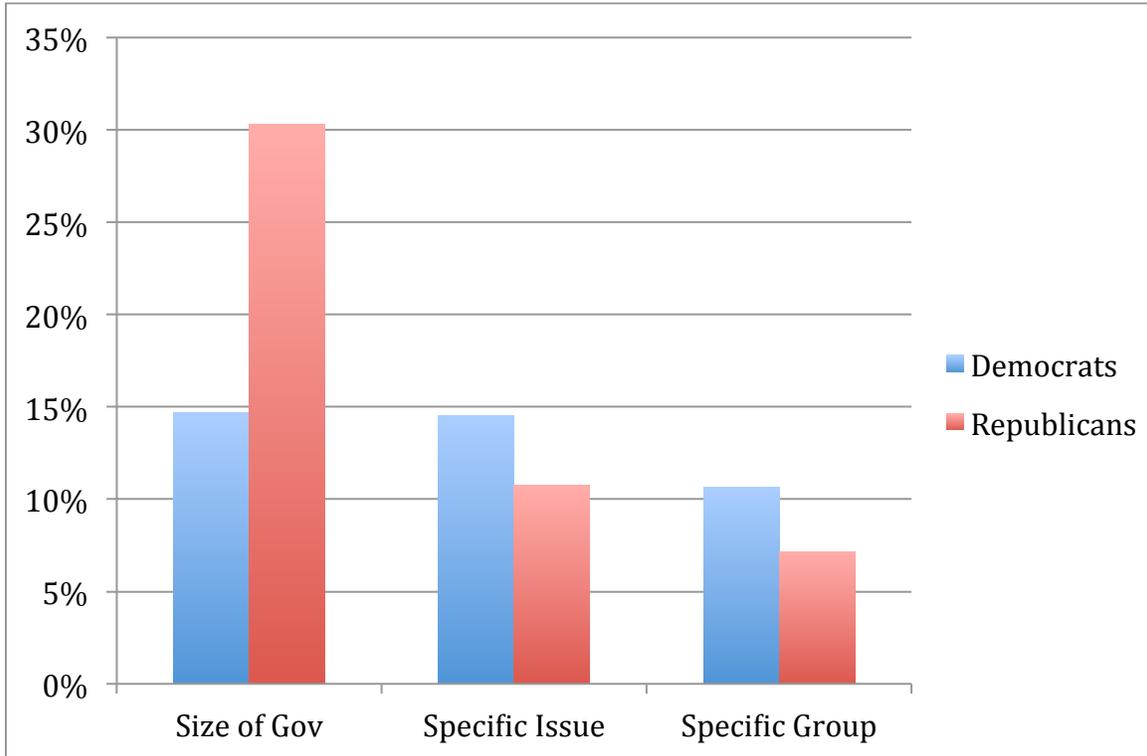
The figure reports the average number of references to each class within presidential campaign speeches from 1952-2012 (with no results available for Goldwater or Romney). The data originates from Jesse Rhodes and Kaylee Johnson, "Class Conscious? Economic Inequality, Party Commitments, and Class Rhetoric in American Presidential Campaigns" and was provided by Jesse Rhodes.

Table 7: Ideological Emphasis in Campaign Advertising

	Focus on Ideology or Personal Values			2010 Mentions		2012 Mentions	
	2000	2002	2004	Liberal	Conserv.	Liberal	Conserv.
Democrats	5%	20%	18%	1%	2%	0%	0%
Republicans	10%	26%	23%	9%	11%	4%	8%

The table reports the percentage of advertising that mentioned ideology or personal values in federal elections from 2000-2004. The data originates from the Campaign Media Analysis Group and was coded by the Wisconsin Advertising Project and the Wesleyan Advertising Project. The 2010 and 2012 data only include explicit mentions of liberal or conservative. Data descriptions and analysis are available in Fowler, Franz, and Ridout, Political Advertising in the United States. Cross-tabulations for 2012 were provided by Erika Franklin Fowler.

Figure 12: Congressional Candidate Advertising, 1968-2008



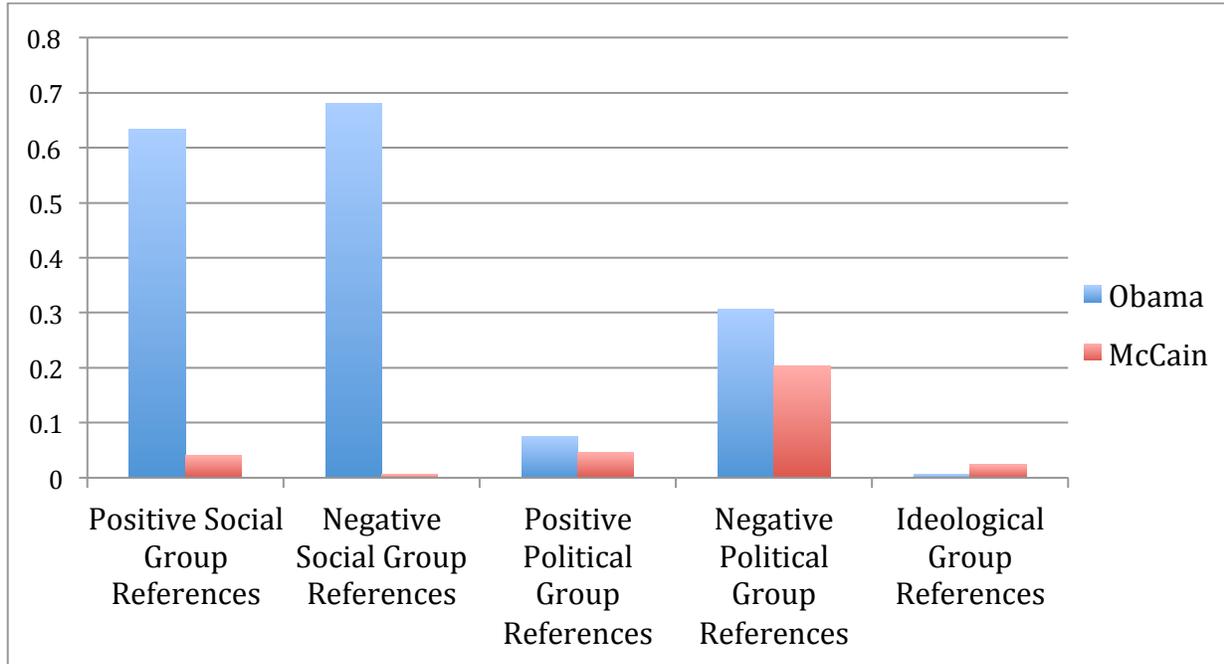
The figure reports the average chance that each party's congressional candidate ad covers three categories of topics: references to the size and scope of government (budget, taxes, big government), specific issue areas (entitlements, environment, health, education, crime, inflation, welfare, drugs, economy, defense, trade, guns, and transport) and specific groups (big business, small business, police, children, middle class, and elderly). The data come from a content analysis of 12,692 congressional television commercials by John Henderson from 1968-2008 and reported in "Downs' Revenge: Elections, Responsibility, and the Rise of Congressional Polarization."

Table 8: Opinions of Issue Advertising by Congressional Campaign Consultants

	Democratic Consultants	Republican Consultants
Number of Issues to Focus on in Campaign	3.3	3.1
Agree Ads Should Focus on Local Issues	34.8%	22.9%
1-5 Rating of Ads That Compare Issue Positions	4.1	3.8

The table reports differences in the responses of Democratic and Republican consultants in U.S. congressional campaigns. General strategy and media consultants that advised multiple congressional candidates in 2002, 2006, or 2010 were included. The results are from a survey conducted by Matt Grossmann and explained in "Campaigning as an Industry." Consultants were asked about the number of issues in an open-ended question, with an overwhelming majority citing three. The comparison of issue ads was on a scale from 1 (not at all effective) to 5 (very effective).

Figure 13: References to Groups in Presidential Advertisements in 2008



The figure reports the proportion of airings that include positive and negative references to social, political, and ideological groups. Social groups incorporate class, race, gender, taxpayers, seniors, economic, occupational, patriotic, family, religious, sexual, and vulnerable groups. Political groups are references to specific or general classes of interest groups, campaign donors, organizations, or lobbyists. Ideological groups are direct references to liberals and conservatives. The data originates from Jesse Rhodes and Kaylee Johnson, "The Politics of Group Targeting in Presidential Campaign Advertisements" and was provided by Jesse Rhodes. We present the totals across all references within each category.

Table 9: Mentions on Candidate Websites

	Democrats	Republicans
Policy Positions	1.88	1.77
Policy Actions	0.88	0.83
Legislation	1.03	0.99
Issues on Front Page	1.87	1.46
Endorsements	14.3	9.5
Group Advocacy	0.35	0.25
General Sentiments	0.06	0.07
Government Reform	0.08	0.09

The table reports the average number of mentions of each item on U.S. House and Senate candidate campaign websites in 2002, 2004, and 2006. Data are from a content analysis by James Druckman, Martin Kifer, and Michael Parkin and published in "Campaign Communications in U.S. Congressional Elections." We created aggregate indicators from their data.

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