

**Partisan Nation:
The Rise of Affective Partisan Polarization in the American Electorate**

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Abstract

Partisan conflict has reached new heights in Washington in recent years but there is considerable disagreement about whether and to what extent partisan conflict has increased in the American electorate. In this paper, I present evidence that there has been a substantial increase in the intensity of partisan affect within the American electorate over the past several decades and that this increase in affective polarization is largely the result of an increase in the strength of voters' ideological preferences. Voters place their own party about the same distance from themselves as in the past but they place the opposing party much further from themselves than in the past. As a result, voters rate their own party about as favorably now as they did forty years ago but they rate the opposing party much less favorably now than forty years ago. These attitudes may be contributing to greater negativity in campaign advertising and other forms of political communication.

One of the most important developments in American politics over the past several decades has been the growing divide between Democrats and Republicans in Washington. Based on a statistical analysis of roll call voting patterns, the ideological divide between the parties in both chambers of Congress is now larger than at any time in the past century. Since the 1970s, Democrats in both the House and Senate have moved to the left while Republicans in both chambers have moved even further to the right. As a result, there is now no overlap between the ideological distributions of the two parties in either chamber, making bipartisan compromise on major issues extremely difficult if not impossible (Poole and Rosenthal 2007). Since the Republican takeover of the House of Representatives in the 2010 midterm elections, this deep ideological divide has contributed to a series of increasingly acrimonious confrontations between the most conservative House majority in modern times and a liberal Democratic President and Senate majority over issues ranging from health care and the environment to the budget and the debt ceiling (Mann and Ornstein 2012).

There is widespread agreement among scholars that partisan polarization has reached new heights in Washington in recent years. However, there is much less agreement about whether and to what extent partisan conflict has increased in the American electorate. According to one school of thought, represented by Morris Fiorina and his co-authors, the rise of partisan polarization in recent decades has largely been confined to political elites and a relatively small group of activists within the public. The result, according to Fiorina, has been a growing disconnect between this “political class” and the American people who are no more partisan or polarized than they were in the 1970s (Fiorina and Abrams 2009; Fiorina 2013).

Fiorina and his co-authors have acknowledged that the American electorate is somewhat better sorted along ideological lines than it was in the past—that there is now a closer connection

between party identification and ideology so that Democrats are more likely to self-identify as liberals and Republicans are more likely to self-identify as conservatives. However, they claim that this limited sorting has not produced any increase in partisan polarization within the electorate (Fiorina, Abrams and Pope 2011).

I have argued elsewhere that partisan sorting and polarization are actually closely connected and that there has been a significant increase in ideological polarization as well as ideological sorting among voters since the 1970s (Abramowitz 2013). In this paper, I present evidence that there has also been a substantial increase in the intensity of party preferences within the American electorate over the past several decades and that this increase in partisan intensity, or affective polarization, is largely the result of an increase in the intensity of voters' ideological preferences. Like Democrats and Republicans in Congress, Democratic and Republican voters are now much more divided along ideological lines than in the past and this increased ideological divide has produced an increase in the intensity of their partisan preferences.

While there has been almost no change in the strength of party identification in recent years, there has been a substantial increase in the strength of partisan affect as measured by the average difference between ratings of the two parties on the American National Election Studies feeling thermometer scale.¹ This increase has been driven almost entirely by increasingly negative ratings by partisans of the opposing party, a fact that may explain why there has been little change in the strength of voters' identification with their own party. Despite the stability of

¹ Data for this study are from the American National Election Studies cumulative file and the 2012 American National Election Study. For the 2012 ANES, I have used only data from the face-to-face interview component of the survey in order to ensure comparability between the 2012 data and data from earlier ANES surveys. Analysis of the 2012 ANES data indicated that there were some differences between results from the face-to-face and Internet-based components of the survey on questions of interest in this study.

party identification, however, the increase in partisan affect has had important consequences, contributing to a substantial increase in party loyalty in voting. As a result, the American electorate is now more partisan in its behavior than at any time in the post-World War II era.

Party Identification and Partisan Affect in the American Electorate

One of the puzzling features of American electoral politics in recent years has been the apparent contradiction between the increasingly partisan behavior of the electorate and the relative stability of the distribution of party identification. Since the 1970s, the proportion of party identifiers, including leaning independents, voting for their party's presidential and congressional candidates has increased and ticket-splitting has declined. In 2012, party loyalty reached its highest level in the history of the American National Election Studies with 92 percent of Democratic identifiers and leaners and 90 percent of Republican identifiers and leaners voting for their party's presidential candidate, 88 percent of Democratic identifiers and 92 percent of Republican identifiers voting for their party's House candidate and 89 percent of all voters casting a straight party ticket in the presidential and House elections. Results from the 2012 National Exit Poll were similar with record levels of party loyalty and straight ticket voting.

[Figure 1 goes here]

Despite this substantial increase in partisan behavior, however, there has been relatively little change in what is perhaps the most commonly used measure of the strength of party attachments in the American electorate—party identification. Figure 1 displays the trend between 1978 and 2012 in the average strength of party identification among voters based on the ANES seven-point party identification scale. In order to measure the strength of party identification, I folded the scale in the middle so that strong Democrats and Republicans received a score of 4, weak Democrats and Republicans received a score of 3, independent Democrats and

Republicans received a score of 2, and pure independents received a score of 1. The results displayed in Figure 1 show almost no change in the average strength of party identification between 1978 and 2012. The average score has ranged fluctuated between 2.9 and 3.1 with no clear trend. In 2012, the average score was 3.0, which was identical to the average score for the past 34 years. There has been a modest increase in the proportion of leaning independents in the electorate since the 1970s along with small decreases in the proportions of pure independents and weak identifiers. However, the proportion of strong identifiers has remained fairly stable at around 35-40 percent since the 1980s after falling somewhat in the 1970s.

[Figure 2 goes here]

Based on the results in Figure 1, one would conclude that there has been little change in the intensity of voters' partisan preferences over the past four decades. But that conclusion would be incorrect. When we measure the intensity of voters' party preferences based on the difference in feeling thermometer scores between the two parties rather than strength of party identification, a very different picture emerges as the evidence displayed in Figure 2 clearly shows. Between 1978, the first year in which the ANES survey included feeling thermometer questions for the two political parties, and 2012, the average difference between voters' ratings of the parties increased from approximately 23 degrees to approximately 39 degrees. The average difference of 39 degrees was the largest for any election in the series.

[Figure 3 goes here]

How can we explain the apparent contradiction between the results displayed in Figures 1 and 2? We see no increase in the average strength of party identification in the electorate even as we see a fairly substantial increase in the intensity of partisan affect measured by the average difference in voters' ratings of the two parties on the feeling thermometer scale. A possible

solution to this puzzle can be seen in Figure 3 which displays the trend in the average feeling thermometer ratings given by party identifiers, including leaning independents, to their own party and to the opposing party. What the evidence displayed in this figure shows is that since the late 1970s, party identifiers' ratings of their own party have been stable, fluctuating around 70 degrees on average. However, over the same time period, party identifiers' ratings of the opposing party have declined rather dramatically from an average of just under 50 degrees in 1978 to an average of about 30 degrees in 2012. So the increasing divide in voters' evaluations of the two parties has been driven almost entirely by declining evaluations of the opposition party. It appears that voters do not like their own party any more than they did thirty or forty years ago. This may explain the flat trend in the strength of party identification. However, it appears that voters dislike the opposing party a good deal more than they did thirty or forty years ago.

[Figure 4 goes here]

How significant is an increase from 23 degrees to 39 degrees in the average difference between voters' ratings of the two parties? We can get some idea of the importance of the change in the intensity of partisan preferences between 1978 and 2012 by comparing the two distributions of preference intensity in Figure 4. For the purpose of comparing the two distributions, I have collapsed the feeling thermometer difference scores which have a range from -100 to +100 into a scale ranging from -5 to +5. A score of -5 indicates that a voter rated the Republican Party at least 50 degrees higher than the Democratic Party while a score of +5 indicates that a voter rated the Democratic Party at least 50 degrees higher than the Republican Party. A score of 0 indicates that a voter gave the parties identical ratings on the feeling thermometer.

The results displayed in Figure 4 show that there is a substantial difference between the two distributions. There were far more voters who rated the two parties identically in 1978 than in 2012. On the other hand, there were far more voters who rated one party at least 50 degrees higher the other party in 2012 than in 1978. The shape of the distribution in 1978 was clearly unimodal, with voters concentrated at or close to the center of the distribution. In contrast, the shape of the distribution in 2012 was clearly bimodal with most voters located at or fairly close to one of the two poles. In other words, with regard to affective evaluations of the two parties, the electorate in 2012 was far more polarized than the electorate in 1978. This shift can also be seen by comparing the standard deviations of the full feeling thermometer difference scales in the two years. The standard deviation of the 1978 distribution was 32.9 degrees while the standard deviation of the 2012 distribution was 48.2 degrees.

Affective polarization is greatest among the most politically engaged members of the electorate—those whose opinions carry the most weight with elected officials. This can be seen by comparing the average absolute difference in ratings of the two parties on the feeling thermometer scale among respondents in the 2012 ANES survey who reported different levels of campaign-related activity. The size of the average absolute difference in feeling thermometer ratings of the parties ranged from 22 degrees for politically inactive respondents to 33 degrees for those who reported engaging in only one activity (generally voting) to 40 degrees for those who reported engaging in two activities (generally voting and trying to persuade a friend, relative or co-worker to support a candidate) to 52 degrees for those engaging in at least three activities. These results show very clearly that the greater the level of citizens' political involvement, the more polarized are their affective evaluations of the parties.

[Table 1 goes here]

The findings presented thus far raise an important question. Does the increase in partisan intensity measured by the growing difference in feeling thermometer ratings of the parties matter given that there has been little or no increase in the strength of party identification over the same time period? Not surprisingly, our measure of partisan affect is highly correlated with party identification, with a Pearson's r ranging from .73 in 1978 to .84 in 2012. However, even after controlling for party identification, partisan affect has a substantial influence on voting behavior.

In every presidential election between 1980 and 2012, partisan affect measured by the difference in party feeling thermometer scores had a large and statistically significant influence on presidential vote after controlling for party identification. In every year except 2000, the partisan affect variable had a stronger impact on vote choice than party identification. The results for the 2012 presidential election are displayed in Table 1. As was the case for seven of the eight previous elections, the Wald statistics for the two independent variables indicate that partisan affect had a stronger direct influence on vote choice than party identification. It is clear that voters' affective evaluations of the two parties have a strong influence on their voting decisions over and above their party identification.

Ideological Polarization and the Rise of Partisan Affect

What might explain the rather substantial increase in affective partisan polarization in the American electorate since the 1970s? One plausible explanation is ideological polarization. We know that the two parties have been moving apart in their ideological orientations for several decades and so have voters who identify with the parties with Democrats moving to the left and Republicans moving to the right. As a result, we would expect that each party's supporters now feel closer to their own party's ideological position relative to the opposing party's ideological position than in the past. This might explain the increase in partisan affect since the larger the

difference in ideological proximity that voters perceive between the two parties, the more strongly they would be expected to prefer the party that they feel closer to.

[Figure 5 goes here]

In order to test the ideological proximity hypothesis, I measured the relative distance of voters from their own party and from the opposing party on the seven-point liberal-conservative scale. Since this scale has a range from one to seven, the ideological proximity scale ranges from zero for a voter who places a party at the same location as herself to six for a voter who places a party at the opposite end of the scale from herself. Figure 5 displays the trend between 1972 and 2012 in the average ideological distance of voters from their own party and the opposing party. Leaning independents were included as party supporters in calculating the distance scores.

The results displayed in Figure 5 show that over this 40 year time period there was almost no change in the average perceived distance between voters and their own party. Voters generally viewed themselves as fairly close to their own party with the average distance score hovering around one unit. In contrast, over the same time period there was a sharp and fairly consistent increase the average perceived distance between voters and the opposing party. Voters in 2012 perceived the opposing party as much more distant from their own ideological position than in 2008. This was true for both Democrats and Republicans. As a result, the average relative ideological proximity score for all party identifiers more than doubled between 1972 and 2012, going from an average of just under one unit to an average of more than 2.2 units on a scale with a range of zero to six.

[Table 2 goes here]

To get some idea of the possible significance of an increase from less than one unit to more than two units in the average relative ideological proximity score, Table 2 displays the proportion of voters in each presidential election year who had either no ideological preference or only a weak ideological preference for a party, those with a score of zero or one, compared with the proportion of voters who had a very or fairly strong ideological preference for a party, those with a score of three or higher. The results in Table 5 show that between 1972 and 2012 there was a rather dramatic decline in the proportion of voters who had either no ideological preference or only a weak ideological preference for a party and an equally dramatic increase in the proportion of voters who had a very or fairly strong ideological preference for a party.

In 1972, a majority of voters had either no ideological preference for a party, placing themselves equally distant from both parties, or only a weak ideological preference, placing themselves only one unit closer to one party than to the other party. By 2012, however, less than a third of voters had either no ideological preference for a party or only a weak ideological preference. Over the same time period, the proportion of voters with a strong ideological preference for a party, those placing themselves at least three units closer to one party than to the other party, increased substantially. This group made up barely one-fifth of the electorate in 1972 but nearly half of the electorate in both 2008 and 2012. As was true for partisan affect, intensity of ideological preferences was strongly related to political engagement. The greater the level of campaign-related activity of citizens, the more intensely they favored one party's ideological position: the average absolute difference in ideological proximity to the two parties was 1.6 units among the politically inactive, 2.0 units among those engaging in only one activity, 2.5 units among those engaging in two activities and 2.9 units among those engaging in three or more activities.

[Figure 6 goes here]

It is possible, of course, that voters' perceptions of their relative proximity to the Democratic and Republican parties are the product of projection more than rational assessment of where the parties stand in relation to their own ideologies. In other words, voters may simply assume that their preferred party is close to their position and that the opposing party is far from their own position regardless of what their own position happens to be. However, this does not appear to be a major problem. As the results displayed in Figure 6 show, there is in fact a very close relationship between where voters place themselves on the liberal-conservative scale and their perceptions of the relative proximity of the two parties.

In 2012, the correlation (Pearson's r) between ideological self-placement and perceived relative proximity was a very strong .86. This was the strongest correlation between ideological self-placement and relative party proximity for any election since 1972. As the results displayed in Figure 6 show, voters who placed themselves at or near the left end of the ideology scale generally perceived the Democratic Party as much closer to themselves than the Republican Party while those who placed themselves at or near the right end of the scale generally perceived the Republican Party as much closer to themselves than the Democratic Party. Those who placed themselves exactly in the center of the ideology scale felt, on average, about equally close to both parties.

[Figure 7 goes here]

The question we are asking is whether and to what extent ideological proximity explains partisan affect. According to the ideological proximity hypothesis, voters now have more intense party preferences on the feeling thermometer scale because they have stronger ideological preferences for a party. In order to test this hypothesis, Figure 7 displays a

scatterplot of the relationship between the average absolute ideological proximity score (the absolute value of the difference between the distance from one's preferred party and the distance from the other party) and the average absolute partisan intensity score (the absolute value of the difference between the feeling thermometer rating of the two parties) for voters in presidential elections between 1980 and 2012.

The results displayed in Figure 7 lend support to the ideological proximity hypothesis. They show that there is a fairly close relationship between the average ideological proximity score of voters and the average partisan affect score of voters and that both relative ideological proximity and partisan affect have increased over time. Voters in 1980 had the smallest average ideological proximity difference and the least intense party preference while voters in 2012 had the largest average ideological proximity difference and the most intense average party preference. These results suggest that increasing ideological proximity differences are contributing to more intense party preferences on the feeling thermometer scale.

[Table 2 goes here]

Additional evidence that ideological polarization is behind the increase in affective partisan intensity can be seen in Table 2 which displays the trends in the correlations of ideological self-placement and issue positions with partisan affect between 1980 and 2012. Two of the policy issues, health insurance and government services, were not included in the ANES survey until 1984. The overall trend is very clear in this table—the correlations of ideology and issue positions with partisan affect have increased fairly steadily. By 2012, intensity of affective party preferences on the feeling thermometer scale was closely related to voters' policy preferences and ideological orientations.

Voters in 2012 with liberal policy preferences tended to rate the Democratic Party much more positively than the Republican Party while voters with conservative policy preferences tended to rate the Republican Party much more positively than the Democratic Party on the feeling thermometer scale. This can be seen very clearly in the case of what was perhaps the single most salient domestic policy issue in the 2012 presidential election—the Affordable Care Act which was signed into law by President Obama in 2010. Opinions on this law were sharply divided within the electorate with 24 percent of voters expressing strong support for the law, placing themselves at the extreme liberal end of a seven-point scale, and 24 percent expressing strong opposition, placing themselves at the extreme conservative end of the same scale. Location on the “Obamacare” scale was strongly related to affective partisan evaluations. Voters who strongly favored the Affordable Care Act rated the Democratic Party an average of 49 degrees higher than the Republican Party while voters who strongly opposed the Affordable Care Act rated the Republican Party an average of 31 degrees higher than the Democratic Party.

[Figure 8 goes here]

The magnitude of the ideological proximity effect in 2012 can be seen very clearly in Figure 8 which displays the mean partisan affect score of voters by their relative ideological distance from the two parties. Positive scores here indicate that a voter perceived the Democratic Party as closer than the Republican Party while negative scores indicate that a voter perceived the Republican Party as closer than the Democratic Party. The correlation between these two variables (Pearson’s r) was .80. Moreover, this relationship has been growing stronger over time. This was the strongest correlation between ideological proximity and partisan affect since the ANES added the party feeling thermometer questions in 1978. The correlation was only .58

in that year but increased to an average of .66 during the 1980s, .70 during the 1990s and .75 during the 2000s.

There was close connection between ideological proximity and partisan affect in 2012. Thus, among the 21 percent of voters in the 2012 ANES who placed themselves at least three units closer to the Democratic Party than to the Republican Party on the ideology scale, the Democratic Party was rated an average of 56 degrees higher than the Republican Party on the feeling thermometer scale; among the 25 percent of voters who placed themselves at least three units closer to the Republican Party than to the Democratic Party on the ideology scale, the Republican Party was rated an average of 46 degrees higher than the Democratic Party on the feeling thermometer scale. Moreover, the relationship between ideological proximity and partisan affect was strongest among the most politically active members of the electorate. The correlation between ideological proximity and partisan affect was .62 for the politically inactive, .68 for those engaging in only one campaign activity, .82 for those engaging in two campaign activities and .90 for those engaging in three or more campaign activities. These results indicate that the more politically involved in politics Americans become, the more influence ideology has on their affective evaluations of the parties.

Of course ideological proximity was not the only influence on partisan affect in 2012. There were a number of other variables could have affected the intensity of voters' partisan preferences including other political attitudes and demographic characteristics. For example, evaluations of national economic conditions and personal finances might have influenced voters' ratings of the parties on the feeling thermometer—with a Democrat in the White House, we would expect positive evaluations of economic conditions and personal finances to produce higher ratings of the Democratic Party relative to the Republican Party and negative evaluations

of economic conditions and personal finances to produce lower ratings of the Democratic Party relative to the Republican Party. In addition, even after controlling for ideological proximity and evaluations of economic conditions and personal finances, we would expect African-American and Hispanic voters to rate the Democratic Party more favorably than the Republican Party compared with white voters given the troubled relationship between the Republican Party and both of these groups in recent years.

[Table 3 goes here]

In order to estimate the contribution of ideological proximity to partisan intensity, I conducted a regression analysis with the partisan affect score as the dependent variable. In addition to relative ideological proximity, evaluation of the national economy and personal finances, a variety of demographic control variables were included in the regression analysis: age, gender, dummy variables for African-Americans, Latinos and other nonwhites (non-Hispanic whites were the excluded racial category), family income, education, marital status, frequency of church attendance, and membership in a union household.

The results of the regression analysis are summarized in Table 3. They show that while several independent variables had statistically significant effects, especially the dummy variable for African-American racial identity, relative ideological proximity had by far the strongest influence of any of the variables included in the regression analysis: a comparison of the standardized regression coefficients shows that the estimated coefficient for relative ideological proximity dwarfs the magnitude of any of the other estimated coefficients. To put these findings in perspective, while the entire set of independent variables explained 70 percent of the variance in partisan affect scores, relative ideological proximity alone explained 64 percent of the variance.

The findings presented thus far provide strong support for the ideological proximity hypothesis. Data from ANES surveys conducted between 1980 and 2012 show that the increasing intensity of voters' partisan preferences on the feeling thermometer scale over this time period coincided very closely with an increasing average difference in relative proximity to the two parties on the liberal-conservative scale. In addition, data from the 2012 ANES show that relative ideological proximity was by far the strongest predictor of partisan affect among voters in the 2012 election. It seems clear that voters' affective evaluations of the parties on the feeling thermometer scale have become increasingly polarized over the past four decades largely as a result of ideological polarization—the growing ideological divide between the Democratic and Republican parties and between their supporters.

[Figure 9 goes here]

The close connection between ideological polarization and affective polarization can be seen very clearly in Figure 9. This figure compares the distribution of partisan affect among two groups of voters in 2012—the 15 percent of voters who placed themselves equally close to both parties on the liberal-conservative scale versus the 46 percent who placed themselves at least three units closer to one party than the other party on the liberal-conservative scale. The contrast between the two distributions is striking. Among the relatively small set of voters who placed themselves equidistant from the two parties on the liberal-conservative scale, the majority were neutral or had only a weak preference for one party on the feeling thermometer scale. In contrast, among the much larger set of voters who perceived one party as much closer to themselves on the liberal-conservative scale, affective evaluations of the parties were highly polarized with the vast majority of voters rating one party much higher than the other on the

feeling thermometer scale. Once again, we see here that affective polarization is very closely related to ideological polarization.

Discussion and Conclusions

Recently, some scholars have drawn a distinction between affective polarization and ideological or policy polarization in the American electorate. They have argued that while affective polarization has increased substantially within the public over the past several decades, ideological or policy polarization has not. According to this theory, ordinary Americans now have more intense feelings about political parties than in the past but these feelings are not closely related to their ideological positions or policy preferences (Hetherington 2009; Iyengar, Sood and Yelkes 2012; Mason 2013). The problem with this theory, however, is that it does not provide a satisfactory explanation of why affective polarization has increased within the public and it ignores abundant evidence of a growing ideological divide between politically engaged Democratic and Republican voters (Abramowitz 2010).

The evidence presented in this paper shows that there is in fact a very close connection between affective polarization and ideological polarization within the American electorate. Since the 1970s, Democratic and Republican voters, like Democratic and Republican elites, have been moving apart in their ideological positions with Democrats moving to the left and Republicans moving to the right. It is this growing ideological divide between supporters of the two parties that largely explains the rise of affective polarization during the same time period.

A substantially larger proportion of voters now view one party as much closer to their own position than the other party on the liberal-conservative scale and these perceptions are strongly related to their affective evaluations of the parties. More specifically, voters place their own party about the same distance from themselves as in the past but they place the opposing party

much further from themselves than in the past. As a result, voters on average rate their own party about as favorably now as they did forty years ago but they rate the opposing party much less favorably now than forty years ago. What we are seeing is asymmetric affective polarization in response to asymmetric ideological polarization.

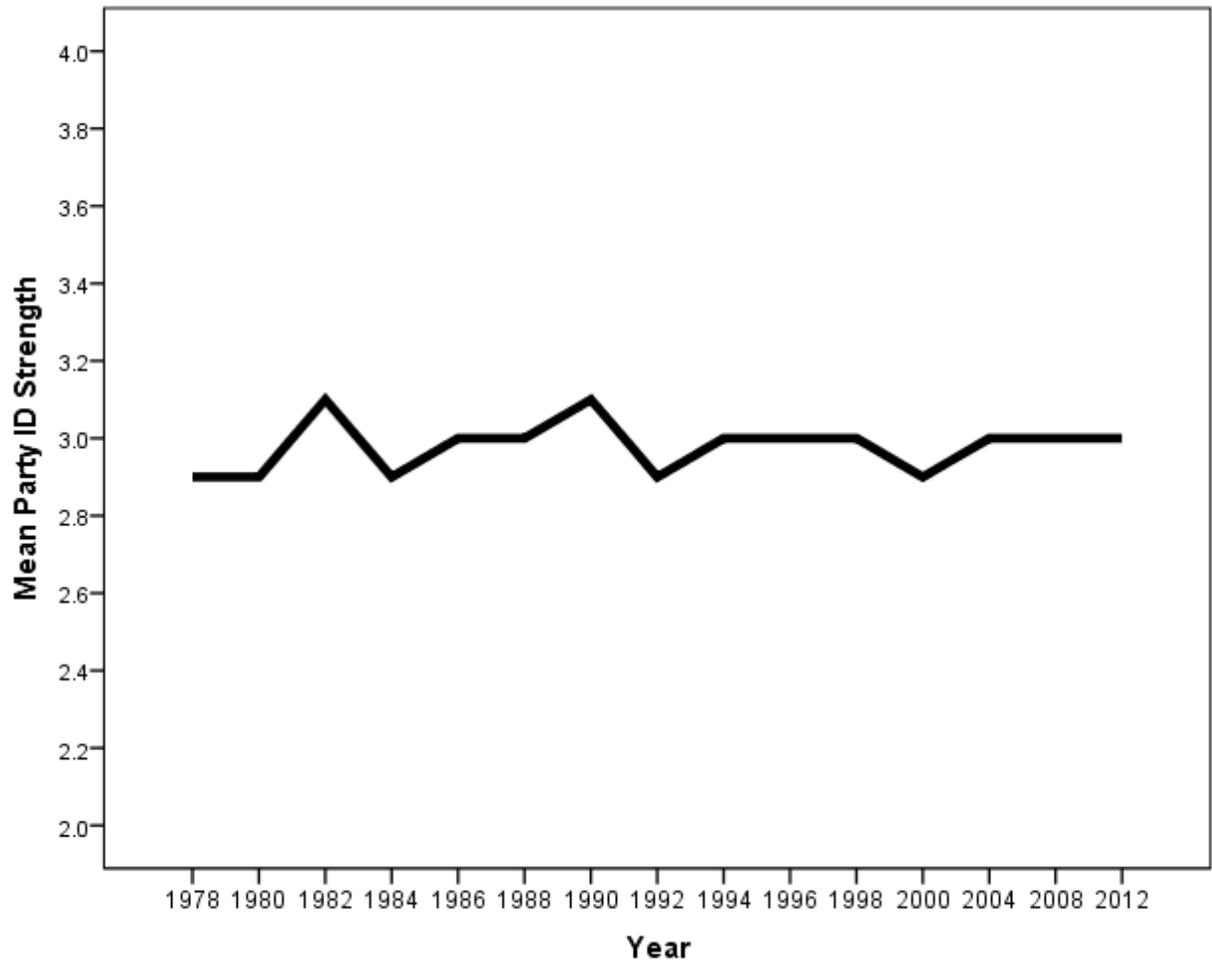
The increase in affective polarization in the American electorate over the past several decades has had major consequences for election campaigns and voting behavior. Although the strength of party identification has changed very little, Democrats and Republicans now perceive the opposing party as much further from themselves on the liberal-conservative scale than in the past and have much more negative feelings about the opposing party than in the past. As a result, party loyalty and straight ticket voting have been increasing. Voters are less likely to cross party lines not because they have more positive opinions of their own party and its candidates but because they have more negative opinions of the opposing party and its candidates. Thus, the opposing party and its candidates have become unacceptable alternatives that one would never even consider supporting.

The increasing ideological distance of partisans from the opposing party and their increasingly negative evaluations of the opposing party may be contributing to the increasingly negative and angry tone of political rhetoric in campaigns and in other arenas such as congressional debates and cable news programs. Voters may be more receptive to negative messages about the opposing party and its candidates than thirty or forty years ago. Therefore such messages may be more effective in energizing and mobilizing partisans than in the past. While negative campaigning may have been a turnoff for most voters in the past, that no longer appears to be true. Attacking the opposing party and its candidates may now be the most effective way of energizing one's supporters, attracting donations and turning out the vote.

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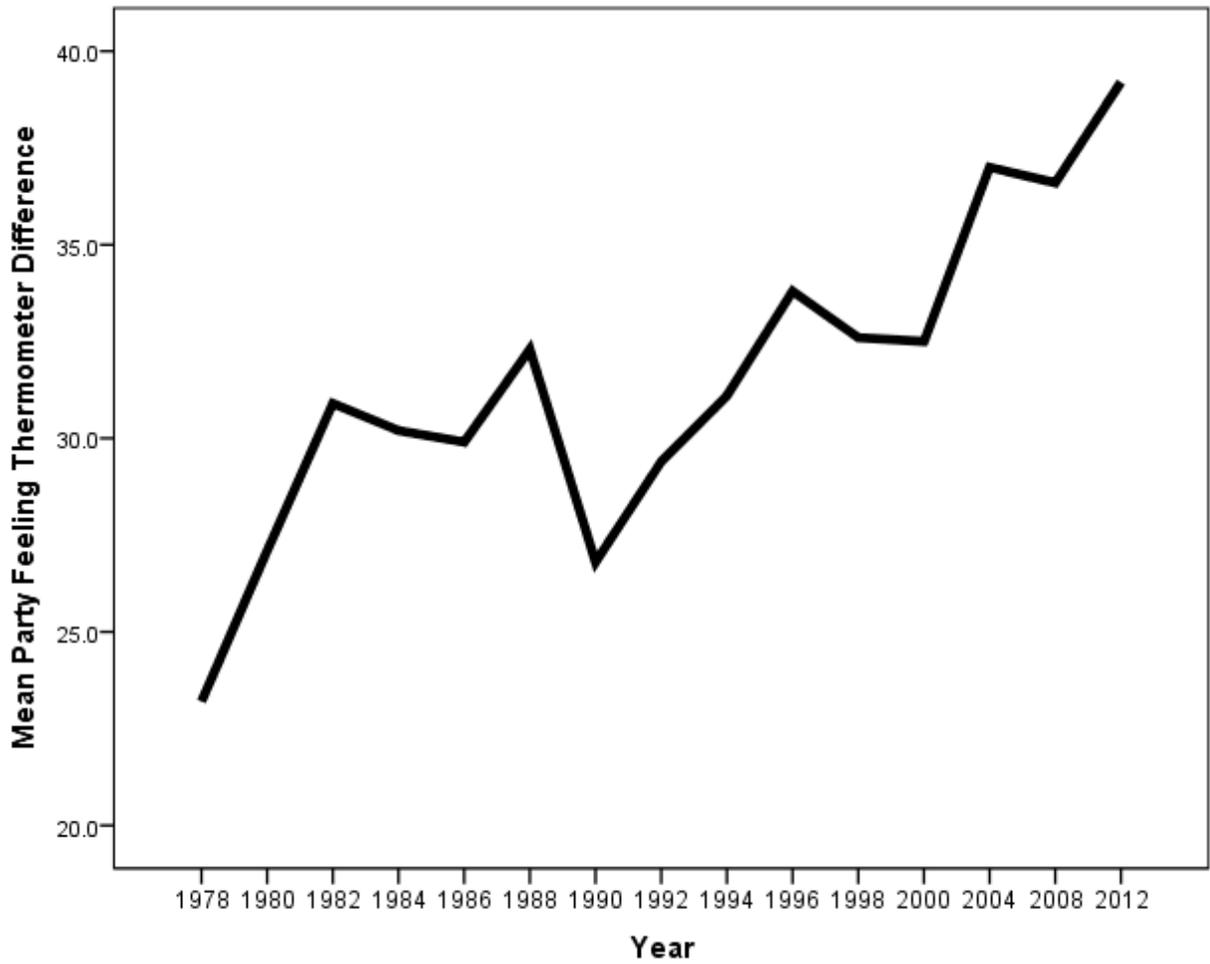
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Figure 1
Average Strength of Party Identification, 1978-2012



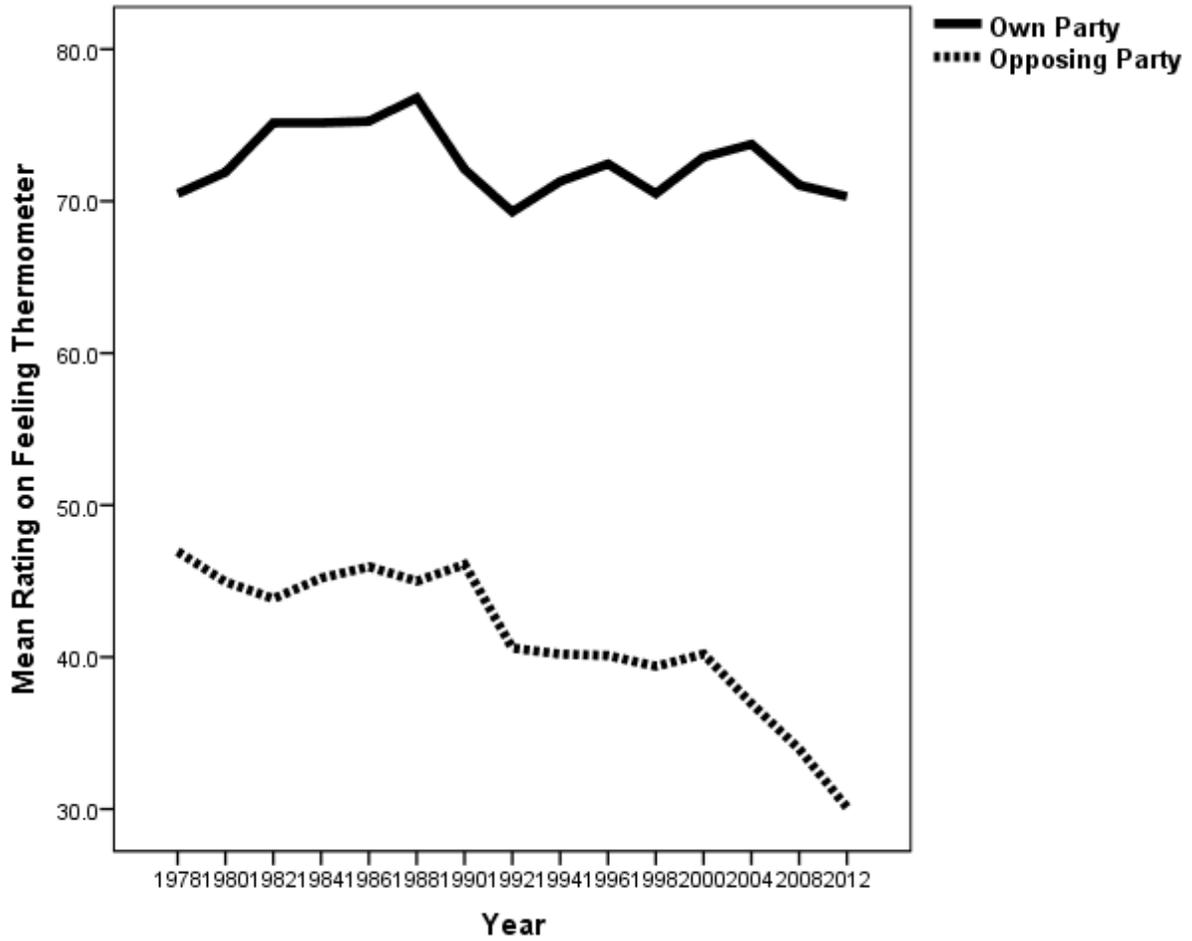
Source: 2012 ANES

Figure 2
Average Intensity of Party Preference on Feeling Thermometer Scale, 1978-2012



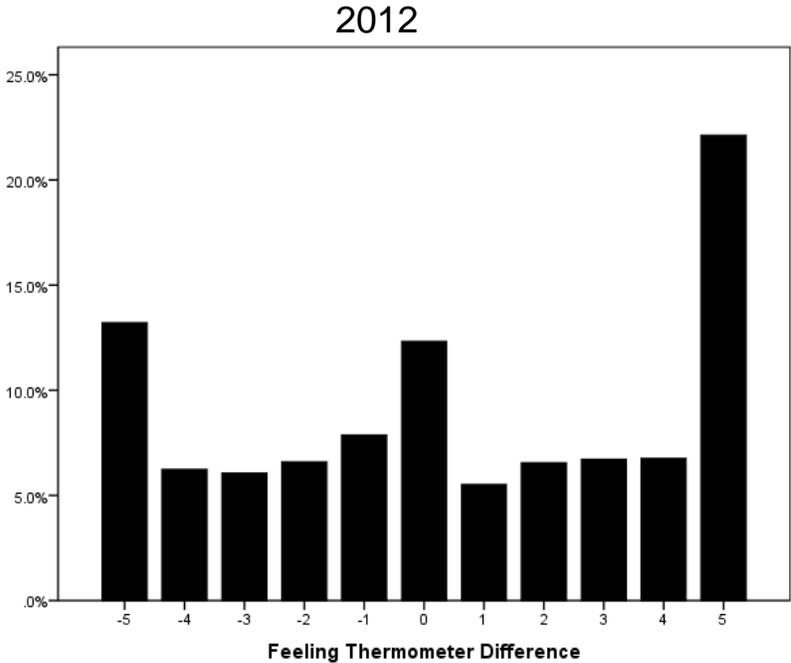
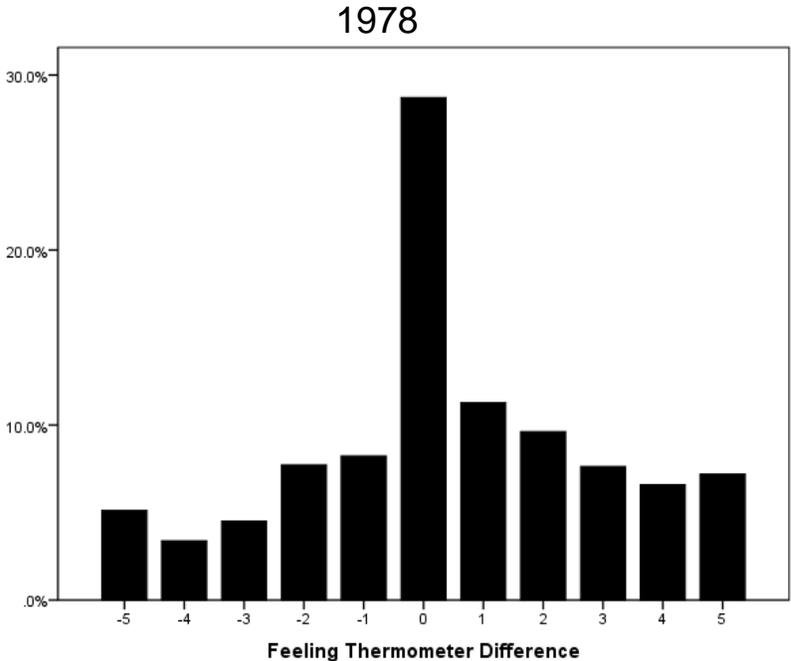
Source: ANES Cumulative File and 2012 ANES

Figure 3
Average Feeling Thermometer Ratings of Own Party and Opposing
Party, 1978-2012



Source: ANES Cumulative File and 2012 ANES

Figure 4
Intensity of Party Preference on Feeling Thermometer Scale in
1978 vs. 2012



Source: ANES Cumulative File and 2012 ANES

Table 1
Results of Logistic Regression Analysis of 2012 Presidential Vote on Party Identification
and Party Feeling Thermometer Difference

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	717.123 ^a	.578	.772

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 6 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Classification Table^a

Observed		Predicted			
		PREPOST SUMMARY: For whom did R vote for President in 2012		Percentage Correct	
		1. Barack Obama	2. Mitt Romney		
Step 1	PREPOST SUMMARY: For whom did R vote for President in 2012	1. Barack Obama	654	81	89.0
		2. Mitt Romney	59	587	90.8
Overall Percentage					89.9

a. The cut value is .500

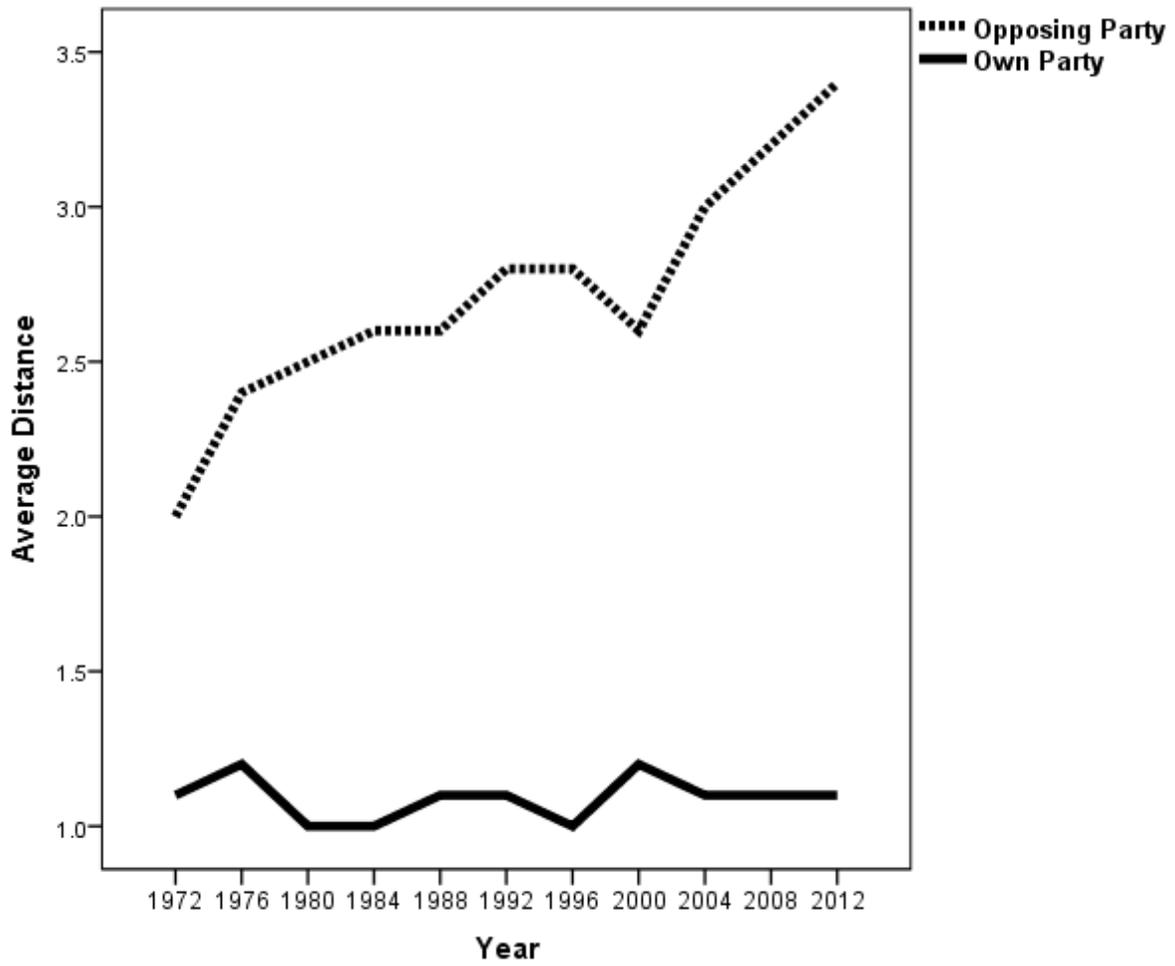
Variables in the Equation

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 ^a pid7pre	.552	.076	52.598	1	.000	1.736
ftpartydiff	-.051	.005	89.735	1	.000	.950
Constant	-2.079	.326	40.605	1	.000	.125

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: pid7pre, ftpartydiff.

Source: 2012 ANES

Figure 5
Mean Distance from Own Party and Opposing Party on Liberal-Conservative
Scale, 1972-2012



Source: ANES Cumulative File and 2012 ANES

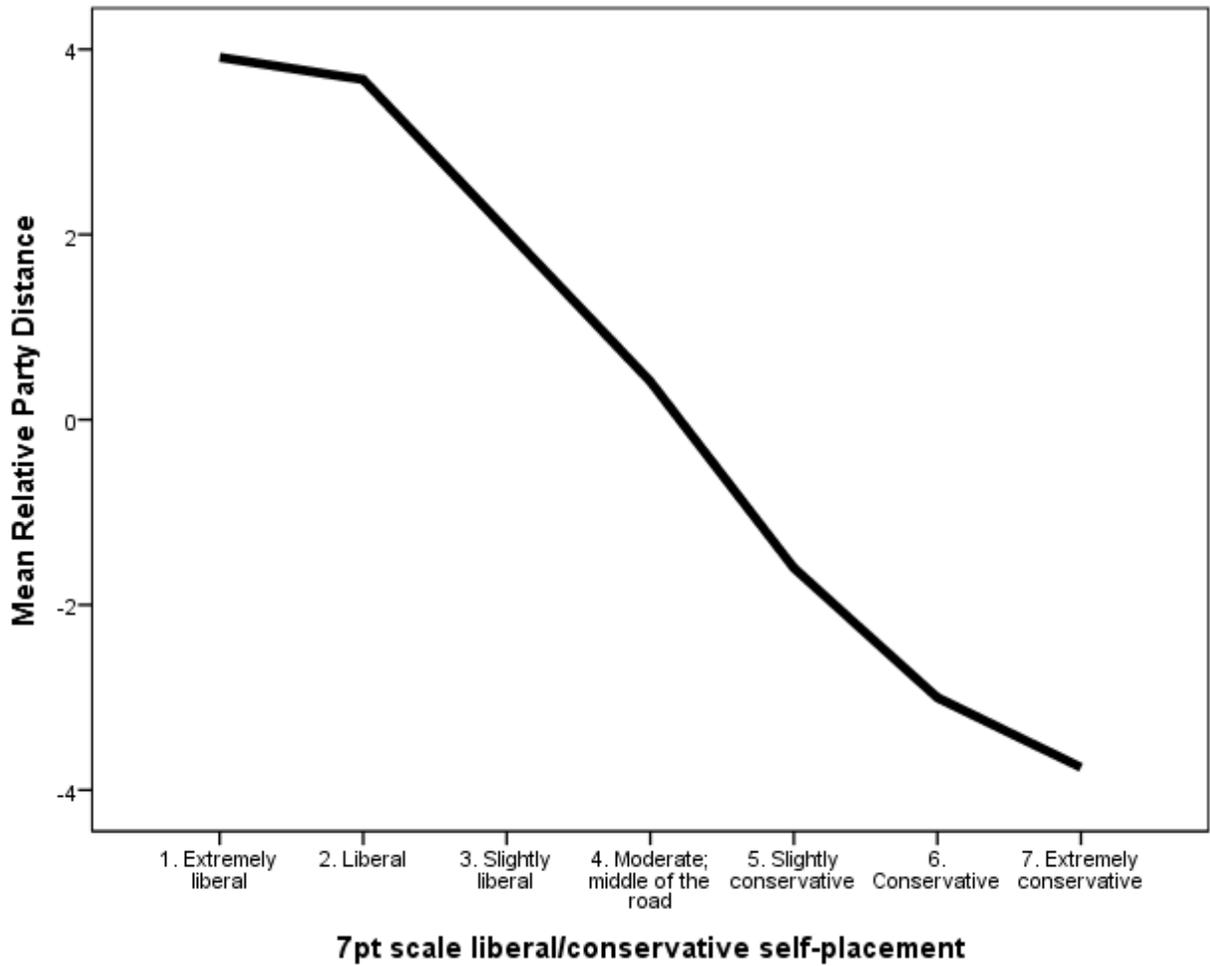
Table 2
Intensity of Party ideological Preference, 1972-2012

Year	None, Weak (0-1)	Strong (3-6)
1972	53%	21%
1976	48%	28%
1980	43%	32%
1984	41%	32%
1988	39%	33%
1992	41%	36%
1996	36%	38%
2000	35%	38%
2004	36%	42%
2008	32%	47%
2012	30%	46%

Source: ANES Cumulative File and 2012 ANES

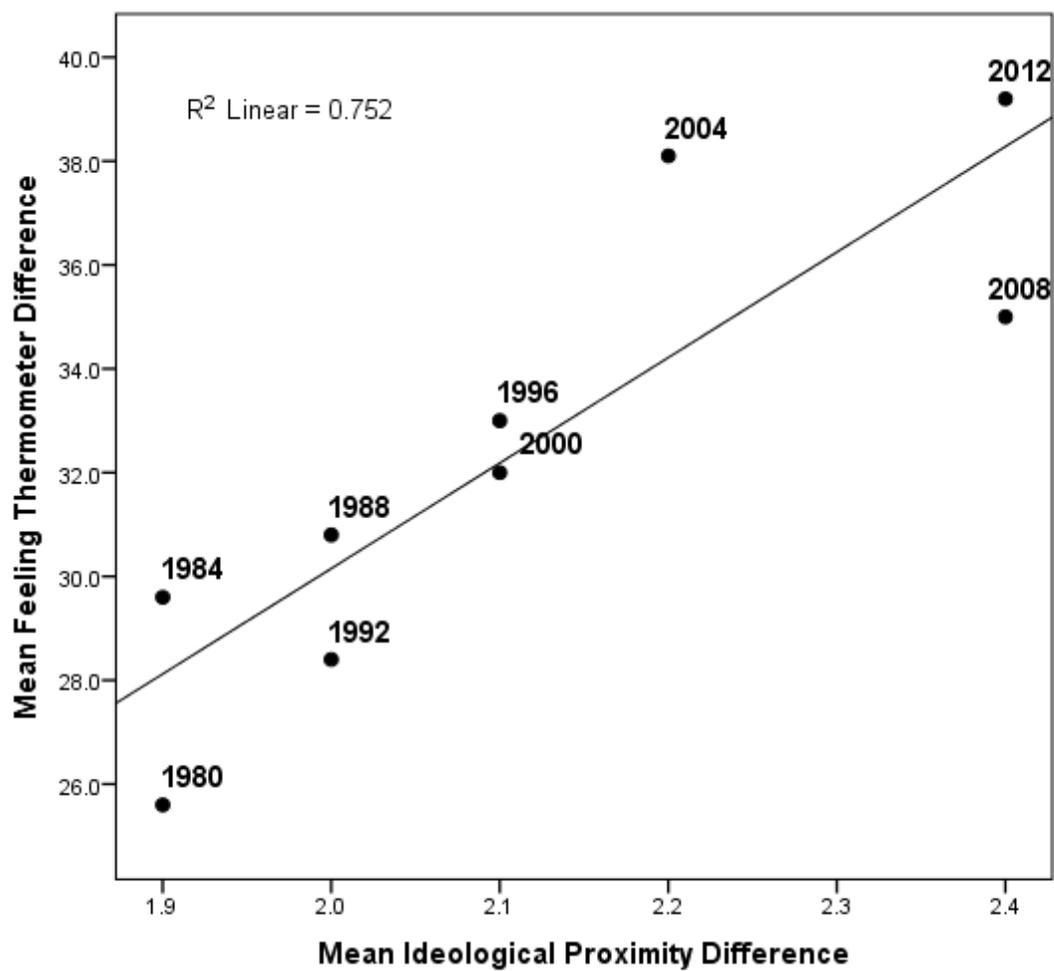
Figure 6

Strength of Party Ideological Preference by Liberal-Conservative Identification in 2012



Source: 2012 ANES

Figure 7
Mean Party Preference on Feeling Thermometer by Mean Ideological Proximity Advantage, 1980-2012



Source: ANES Cumulative File and 2012 ANES

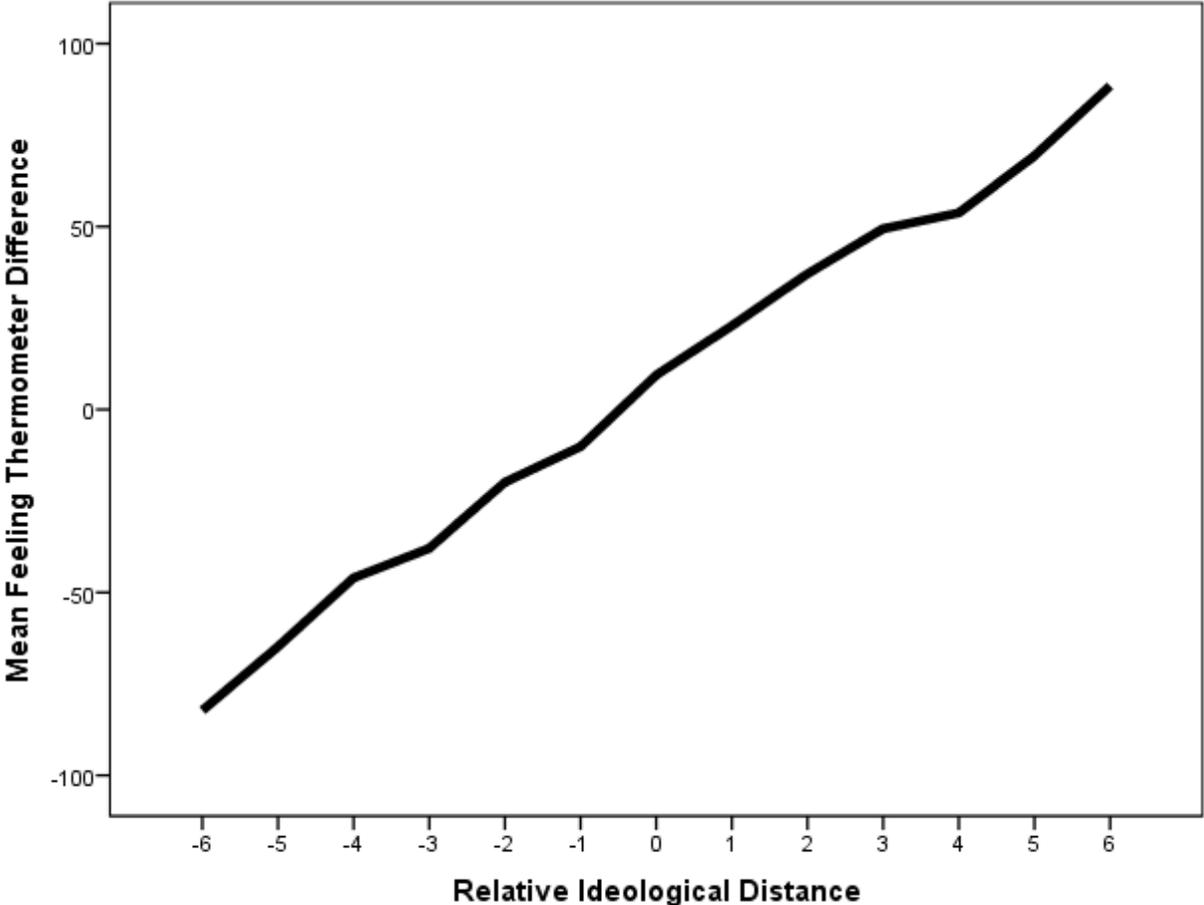
Table 2
 Correlation of Party Difference on Feeling Thermometer Scale with
 Ideology and Issues, 1980-2012

Correlation of Party Feeling Thermometer Preference with

Year	Ideology	Health Insurance	Gov't Services	Abortion
1980	.46			-.02
1984	.50	.31	.41	.15
1988	.51	.31	.37	.05
1992	.51	.37	.36	.20
1996	.56	.45	.47	.18
2000	.59	.31	.41	.23
2004	.63	.37	.43	.23
2008	.65	.47	.52	.34
2012	.69	.55	.54	.33

Source: ANES Cumulative File and 2012 ANES

Figure 8
Party Preference on Feeling Thermometer Scale by Relative Ideological Proximity to
Parties in 2012



Source: 2012 ANES

Table 3
Regression Analysis of Party Difference on Feeling Thermometer Scale in 2012

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.836	.699	.695	26.631

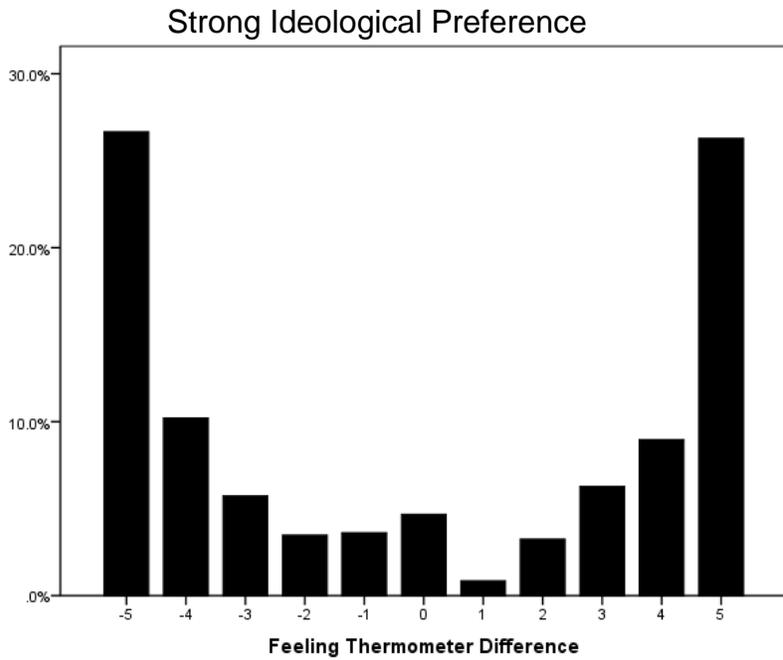
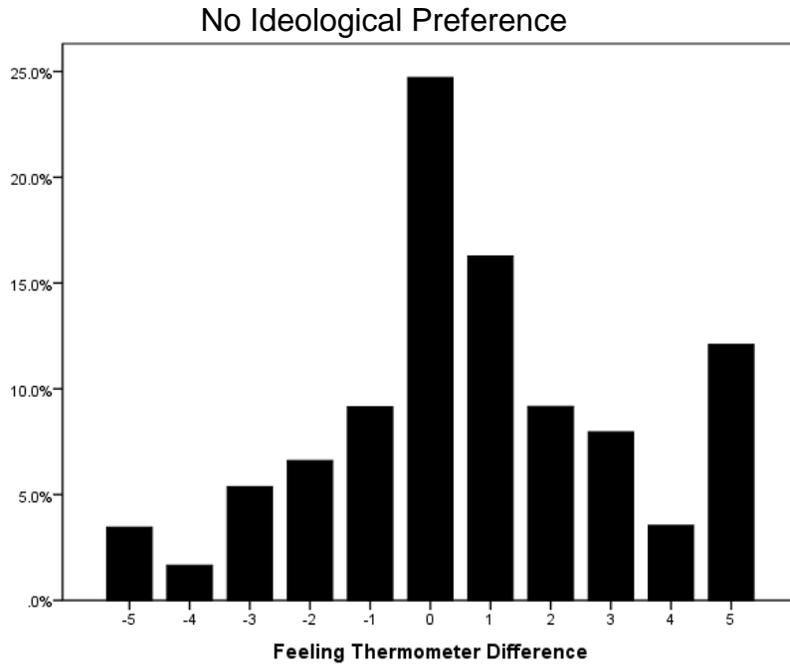
Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	20.261	5.777		3.507	.000
	lc7relpartydist	11.903	.380	.707	31.362	.000
	PRE: SUMMARY- U.S. economy better or worse than 1 year ago	-3.123	1.028	-.069	-3.037	.002
	PRE: SUMMARY- Better or worse off than 1 year ago	-2.439	.849	-.057	-2.873	.004
	PRE: SUMMARY- R age on interview date (age group)	.096	.255	.007	.374	.708
	PRE: SUMMARY- R level of highest education	-.333	.826	-.008	-.403	.687
	PRE: CASIWEB: SUMMARY- Pre family income (see also: incgroup_prepost)	.167	.135	.026	1.236	.217
	married	-4.323	1.940	-.043	-2.229	.026
	Black	30.141	3.495	.166	8.623	.000
	Latino	11.088	3.431	.059	3.231	.001
	Othrace	6.023	3.890	.028	1.548	.122
	chfreq	-.776	.558	-.026	-1.392	.164
	unionhh2	10.639	2.278	.084	4.670	.000

a. Dependent Variable: ftpartydiff

Source: 2012 ANES

Figure 9
Difference in Party Ratings on Feeling Thermometer Scale by Strength of Party
Ideological Preference in 2012



Source: 2012 ANES