

Political Parties and Ideology in a Diverse Society Part III



Political parties exist to secure responsible government and to execute the will of the people. From these great tasks both of the old parties have turned aside. Instead of instruments to promote the general welfare they have become the tools of corrupt interests, which use them impartially to serve their selfish purposes. Behind the ostensible government sits enthroned an invisible government owing no allegiance and acknowledging no responsibility to the people. To destroy this invisible government, to dissolve the unholy alliance between corrupt business and corrupt politics, is the first task of the statesmanship of the day.

Teddy Roosevelt

The Parties at War



- Partisan rancor now characterizes American politics.
- Although present in the past, it seems to be worsening.
- causes
 - **intense competition** due to equal strength
 - perceived need to **mobilize core supporters** rather than to attract independent voters



Political and Social Changes



- **direct primary**: replaced party organization as method for choosing party's nominee
- **civil service laws**: replaced patronage
- **issue-oriented politics**
 - post-WWII era: rise in education associated with rise in focusing on politics in context of specific issues
 - focus on civil rights, tax-cutting, environmentalism, etc rather than party labels
 - Issue-oriented politics leads to more ticket-splitting.
- **shift from urban to suburban locales**: privacy and detachment (hurt party organizers)
- **television**: emphasizes personalities rather than abstracts like party label

Party Identification



- ...the sense of belonging to a party
- 1930s-1990s: More Americans identified themselves as Democrats than Republicans.
- Since September 11, 2001, an equal number of Americans have identified themselves as Democrats and Republicans.
- **Party balance among voters has important effects on who rules in Washington and especially on which party controls Congress.**
- Since the 1960s, an increasing number of Americans have identified themselves as **independents** ... from 19% in 1958 to 38% in 1978. Since then the number of independents has risen and fallen but the trend is still upward.

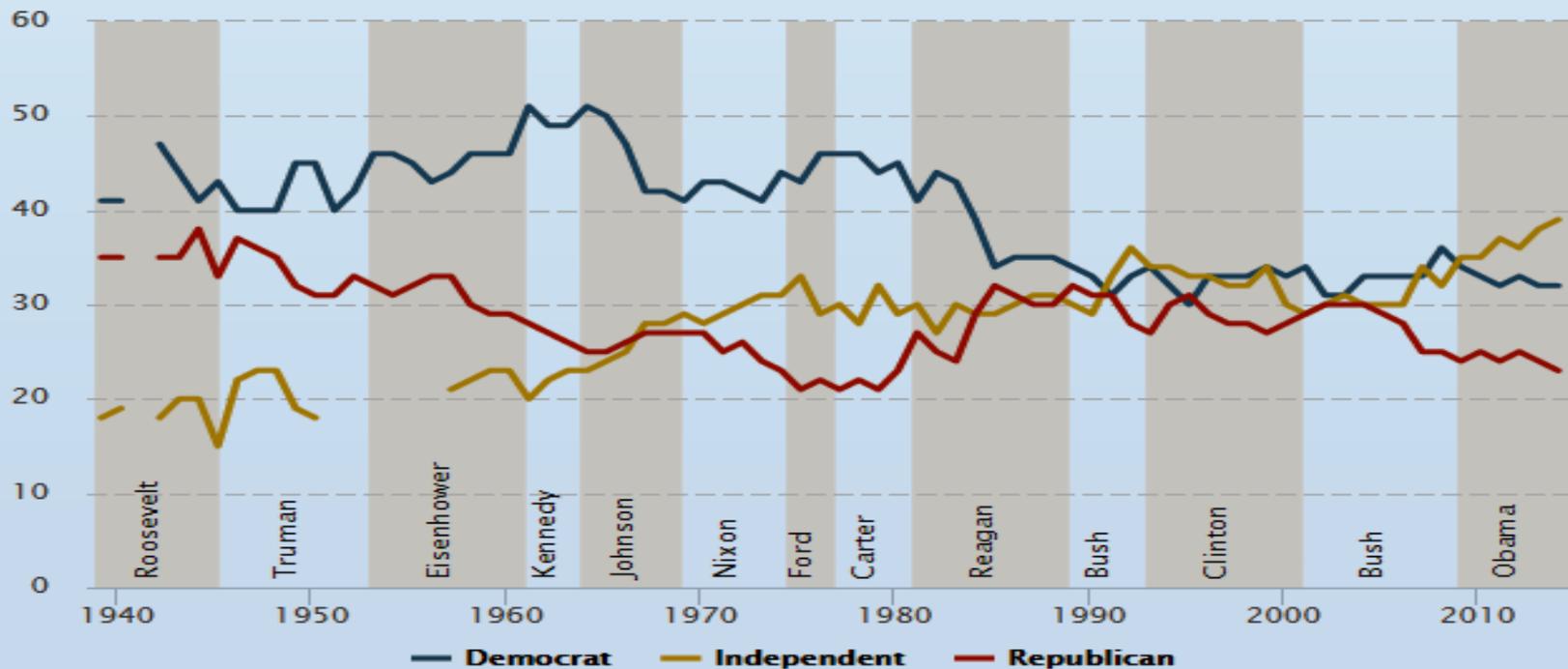


Trends in Party Identification, 1939-2014



For more than 70 years, with few exceptions, more Americans have identified as Democrats than Republicans. But the share of independents, which surpassed the percentages of either Democrats or Republicans several years ago, continues to increase. Currently, 39% of Americans identify as independents, 32% as Democrats and 23% as Republicans. This is the highest percentage of independents in more than 75 years of public opinion polling.

% of Americans who say they are ...



Party Identification



- Many independents are *leaning* independents.
 - tend to vote very much like real partisans
 - generally reluctant to reveal their leanings
 - May indicate that party labels are viewed as an offense to their individualism.
 - growth of issue-oriented politics
 - personality politics
 - party splits



Types of Independents



- **disengaged** (25%): removed from the political fray often by choice, less than 40% are registered to vote and less than 20% pay “a lot” of attention to politics, 75% “not very interested in politics,” view both Democrats and Republicans favorably, confidence in the government to make the right decisions
- **disguised partisans**: tend to think and vote like partisans, more negative about politics, more likely to have supported an independent, get a lot of information about politics from blogs
- **deliberators**: classic swing voters who believe in the two-party system, tend to have favorable views of the parties and repeatedly vote independent at the ballot box, tend to be open to candidates from both major parties, vote about equally for Democrats and Republicans and believe it is essential that politicians work across party lines, have faith in the system and are hopeful about the country’s future, most say the two-party system does a good job representing their views, the most politically active independents

Types of Independents



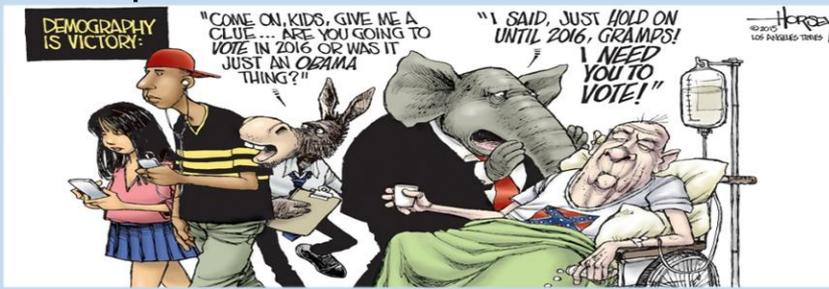
- **disillusioned**: 70% deeply dissatisfied with politics today and antagonistic to both parties and the two-party system itself, 80% express little or no confidence in government and think Democrats and Republicans are pretty much the same, Bush and Iraq war are crucial components of the disillusionment, lean slightly Democratic but high levels of disenchantment could keep them home, would welcome independent candidate
- **dislocated**: overwhelmingly socially liberal and fiscally conservative, uncomfortable with increasingly polarized parties, ideologically dislocated but engaged and active, 67% are male, least religious of any segment, most likely of any group to get “a lot” of their political information from the web, 33% describe themselves as “libertarians” and 46% percent as “progressives”



Parties and Demographics



- **geographic region:** South still has Democratic Party affinity at local election level but is Republican at state and national.
- **race and ethnicity:** Democrats have advantage with African Americans, Asians and Hispanics, Republicans with Whites.
- **age:** Young people, especially Millennials (ages 18-34), more Democratic. Same of GenX (34-54) and Boomers (54-70) with smaller margins. Silent Generation (70+) is Republican.
- **education:** Highly-educated adults tend toward Democrats. Less educated white males Republican.
- **economic:** Republicans' supporters have higher occupations, income.
- **gender:** Republicans have advantage with men, especially white men. Women Democratic.
- **religion:** Protestants, especially Evangelicals, and Mormons favor Republicans. Catholics, Jews and unaffiliated mostly Democratic.
- **marital status:** Married people lean more toward Republicans.
- **ideology:** Conservatives almost exclusively Republican. Liberals exclusively Democratic.



Parties and Representation

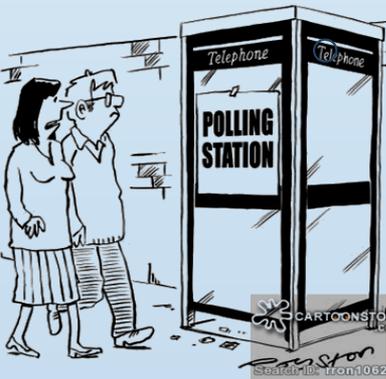


- Party politics is increasingly **polarized by race**. Since 1960, the party identification and partisan voting patterns of blacks and whites have become sharply divided.
- **Race** is the most significant factor in **urban local elections**, where race is a more decisive factor than income, education, religion, sexual orientation, age, gender or political ideology. The 38% racial gap exceeds even the 33% gap between Democratic and Republican voters.
- Based on available data from 1972 to 2010, blacks were the **least advantaged group in terms of policy outcomes**. Blacks were policy winners only 31.9% of the time, compared with 37.6% for whites. This difference seems small, but it is ten times larger than the 0.5% difference between high- and low-income earners.

Parties and Representation



- Since 1965, the **black/white racial gap in voter turnout** has decreased dramatically in presidential elections. Turnout among black Southerners exceeded that of their white counterparts in 4 of the 12 presidential elections since 1965, and nationwide black turnout clearly exceeded white turnout in presidential elections in 2012 and perhaps in 2008.



Local election turnout is lower, possibly less diverse. Presidential general election turnout is generally 60% of the voting-age population, but local election turnout averages 27% and in some cases is less than 10%. As overall turnout declines in local elections, the electorate may become less representative of the racial diversity of the community as a whole.

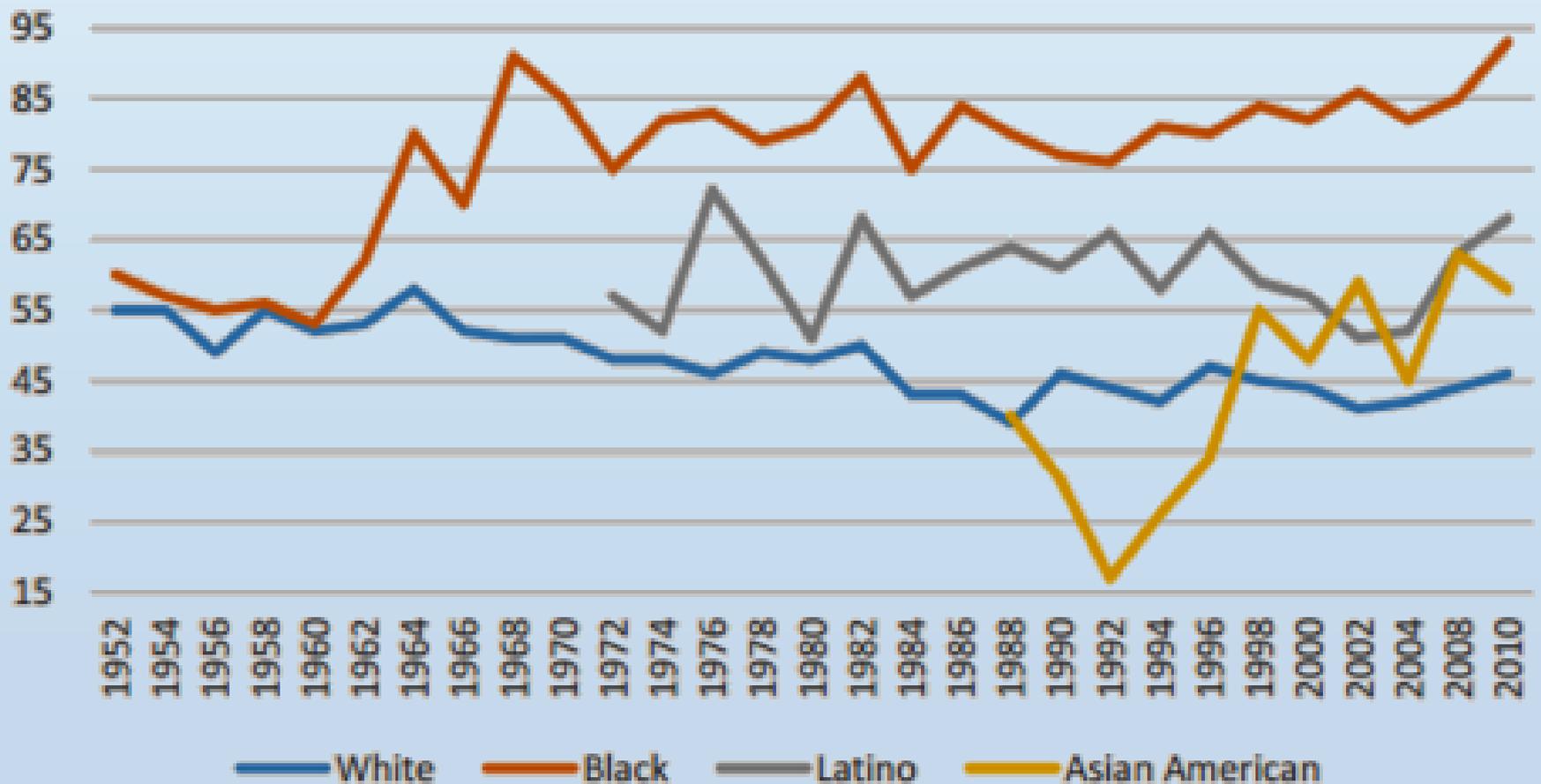
"Something tells me they're expecting a low voter turnout."

- **Latino and Asian American turnout** increased but remains low. Turnout rates among both Asian Americans and Hispanic Americans in presidential elections remain 10% to 15% below black Americans and 15% to 20% below white Americans.

Parties and Representation



Democratic Party Identification Over Time

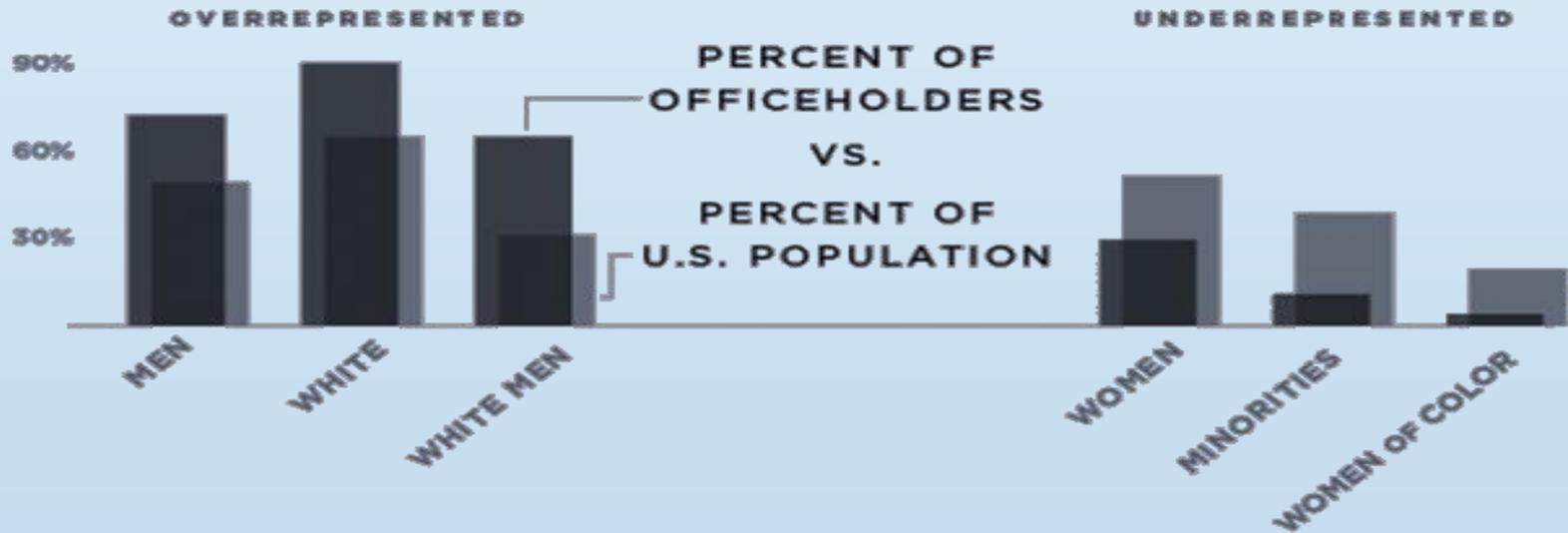


Parties and Representation



(MIS)REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

Women & minorities are significantly underrepresented across all levels of government.



SOURCE: REFLECTIVE DEMOCRACY CAMPAIGN

THINKPROGRESS

Parties and Representation

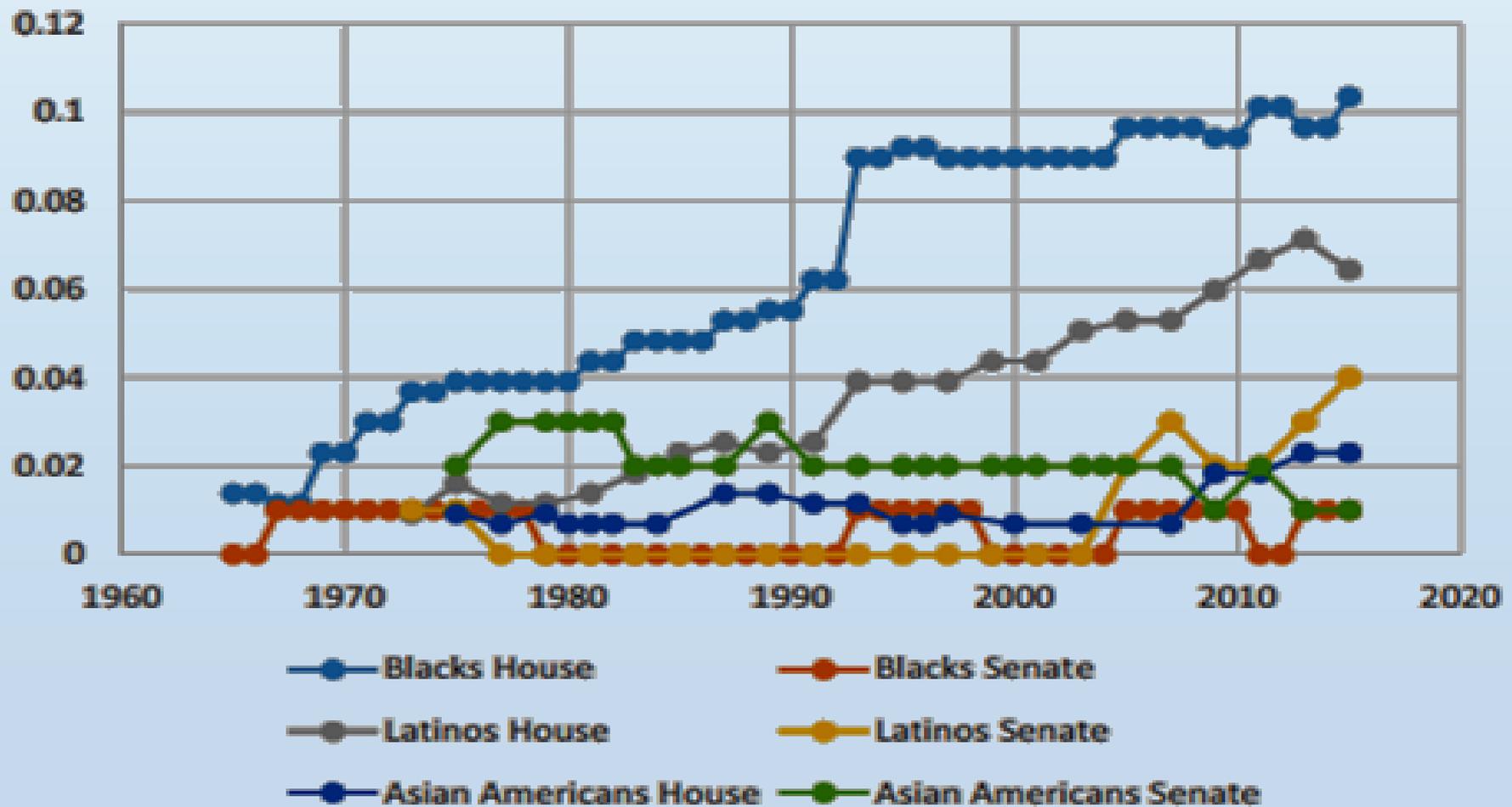


- Since 1965, the number of **elected officials of color** has grown enormously. Over this period, African Americans went from holding fewer than 1,000 elected offices nationwide to over 10,000, Latinos from a small number of offices to over 6,000, and Asian Americans from under a hundred documented cases to almost 1,000.
- Despite that growth, people of color **remain underrepresented in elected office**. Based on the most recent data, **African Americans** are 12.5% of the citizen voting age population, but they make up a smaller share of the US House (10%), state legislatures (8.5%), city councils (5.7%) and the US Senate (2%). **Latinos** make up 11% of the citizen voting age population, but they are a smaller share of the US House (7%), state legislatures (5%), the US Senate (4%) and city councils (3.3%). **Asian** Americans are 3.8% of the citizen voting age population but a smaller share of the US House (2%), state legislatures (2%), the US Senate (1%) and city councils (0.4%).

Parties and Representation



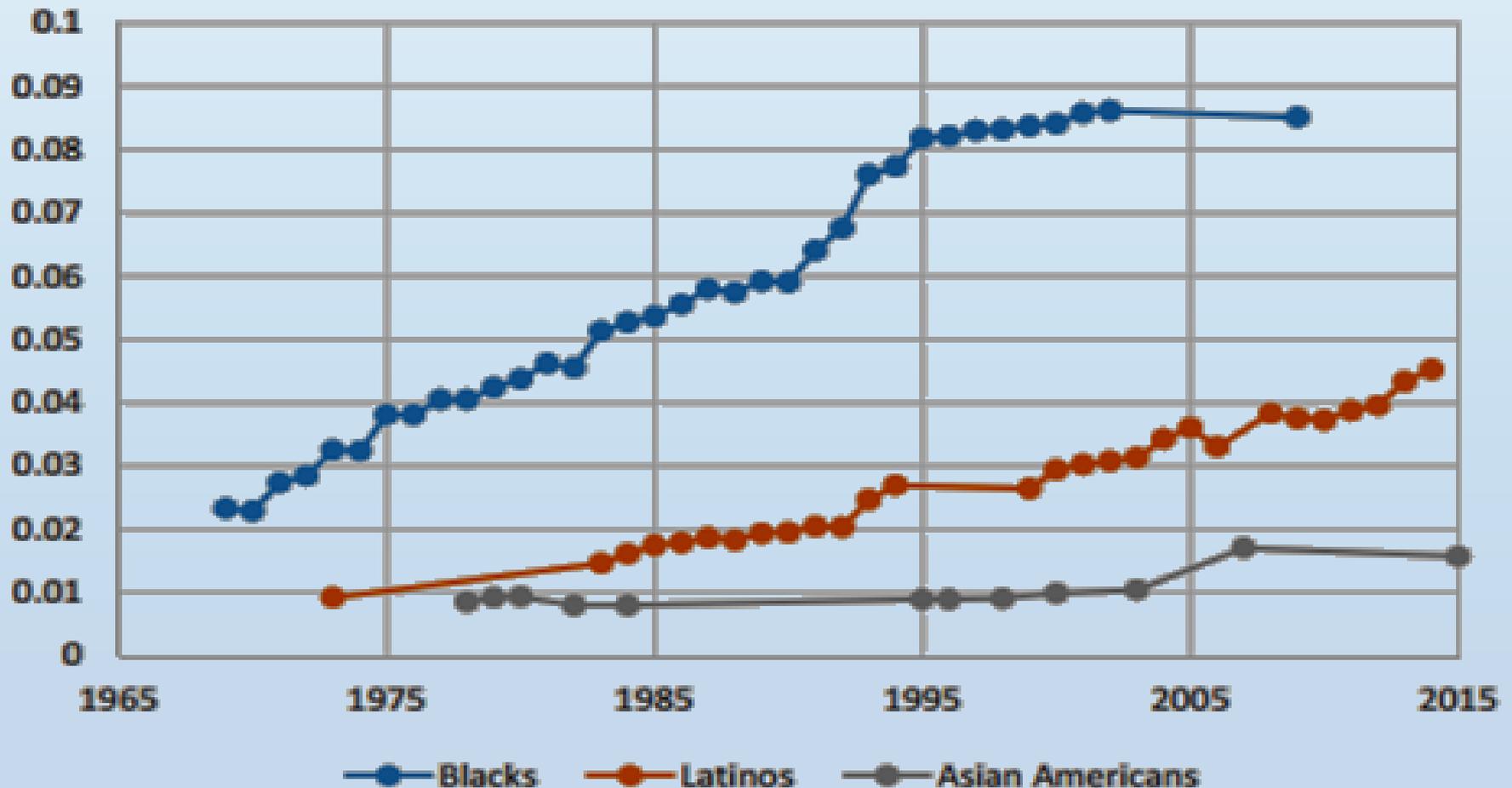
Share of Congress Held By Minorities



Parties and Representation



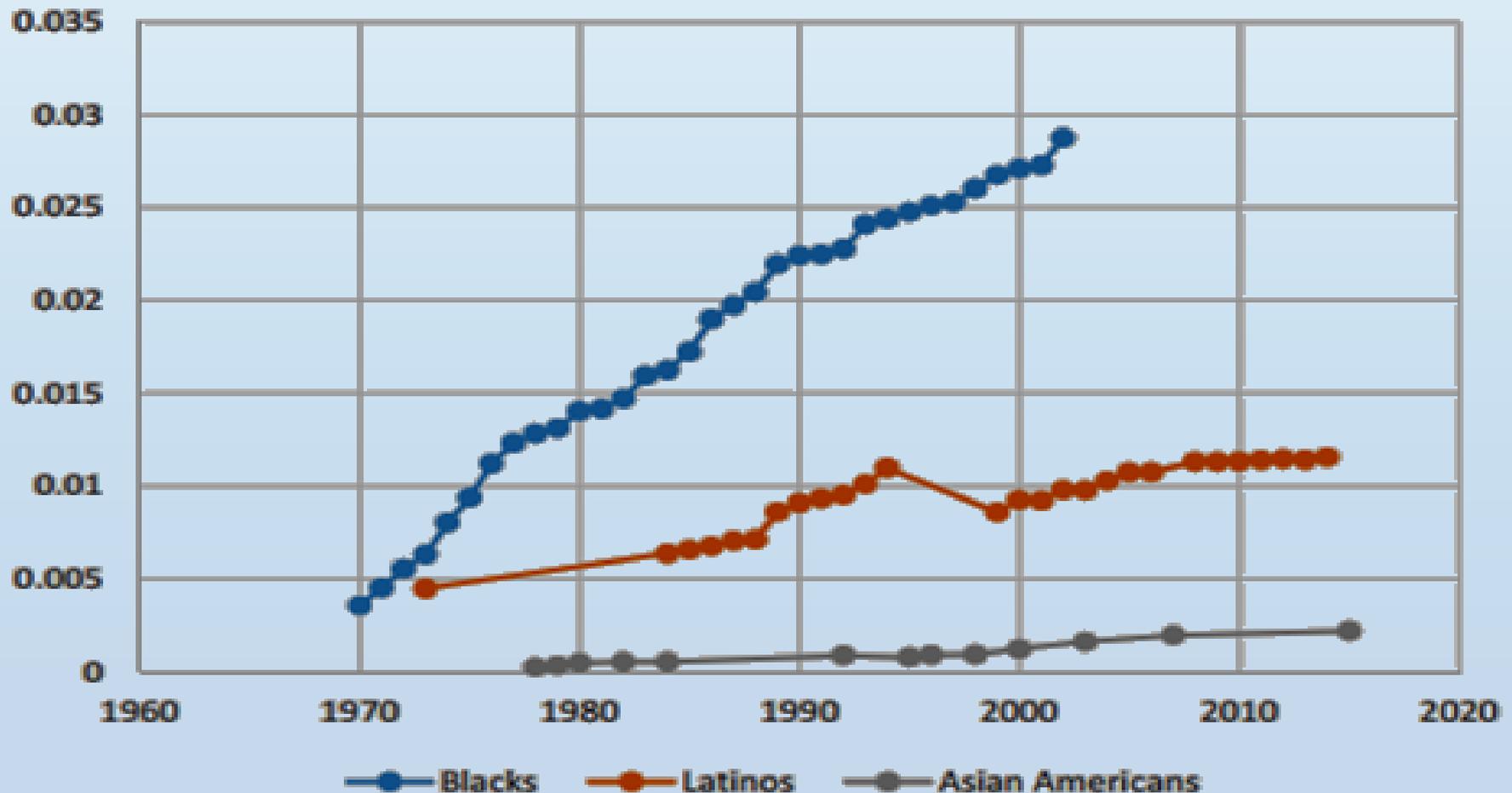
Share of State Legislatures Held By Minorities



Parties and Representation



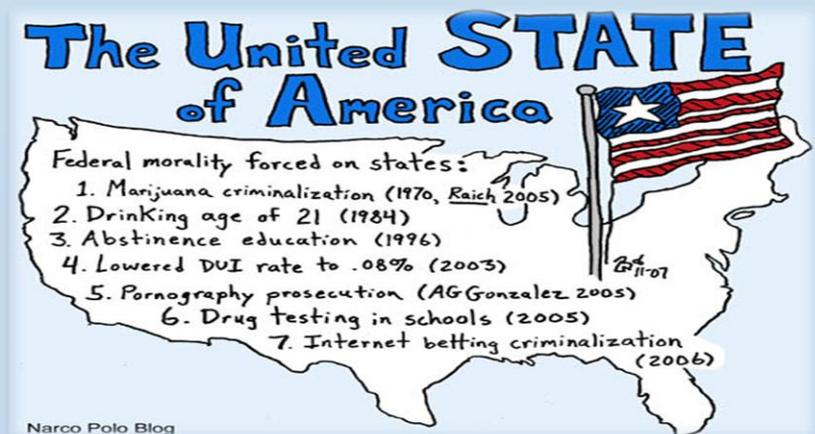
Share of Local Offices Held By Minorities



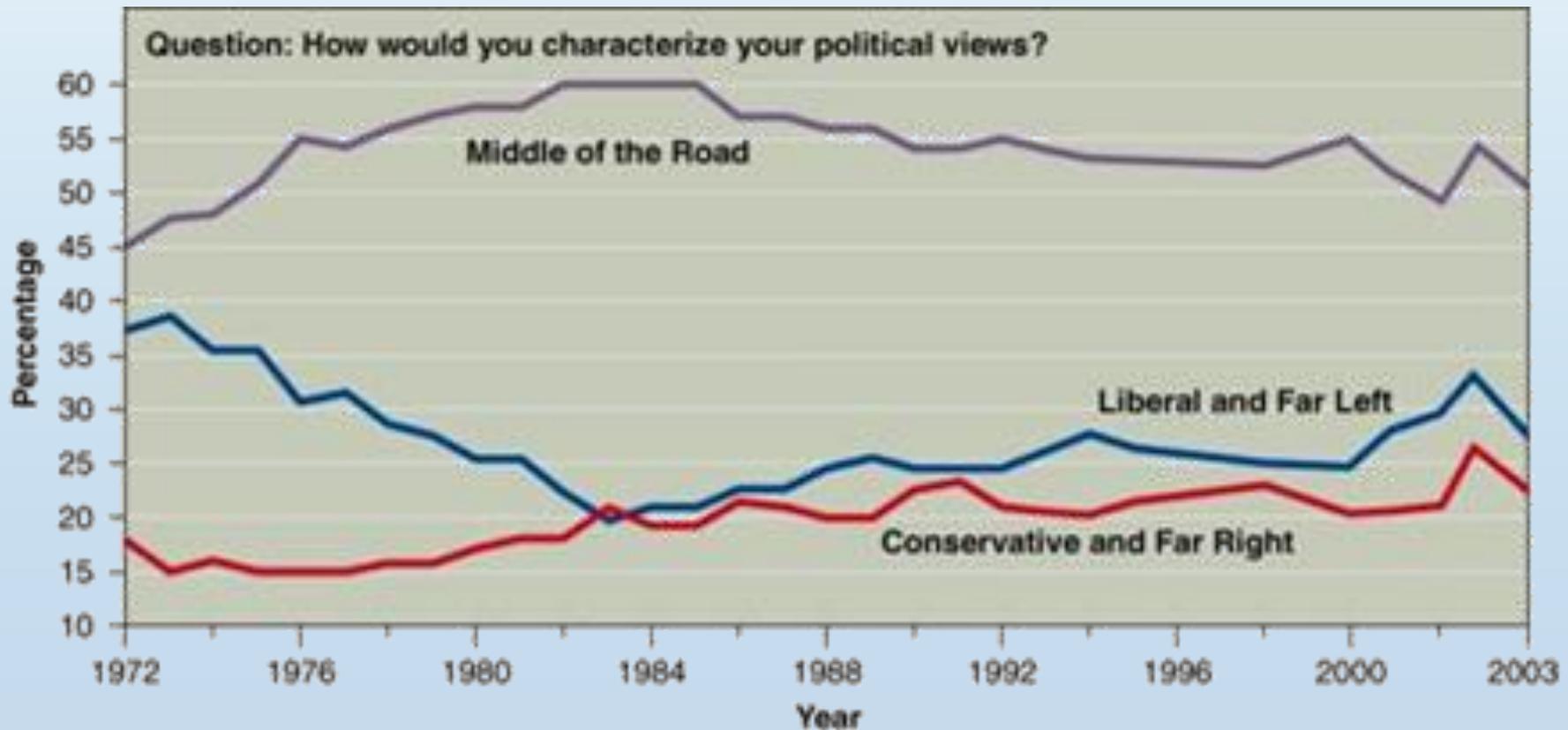
Parties and Ideology



- **ideology**: organized set of beliefs about the fundamental nature of the good society and the role government ought to play in achieving it
- Each party's core supporters are more ideologically oriented than the general public.
- Yet both parties are broad coalitions, and face strong pressures to be ideologically ambiguous in order to win in winner-take-all, single-member-district elections.



The Ideological Self-Identification of First-Year College Students

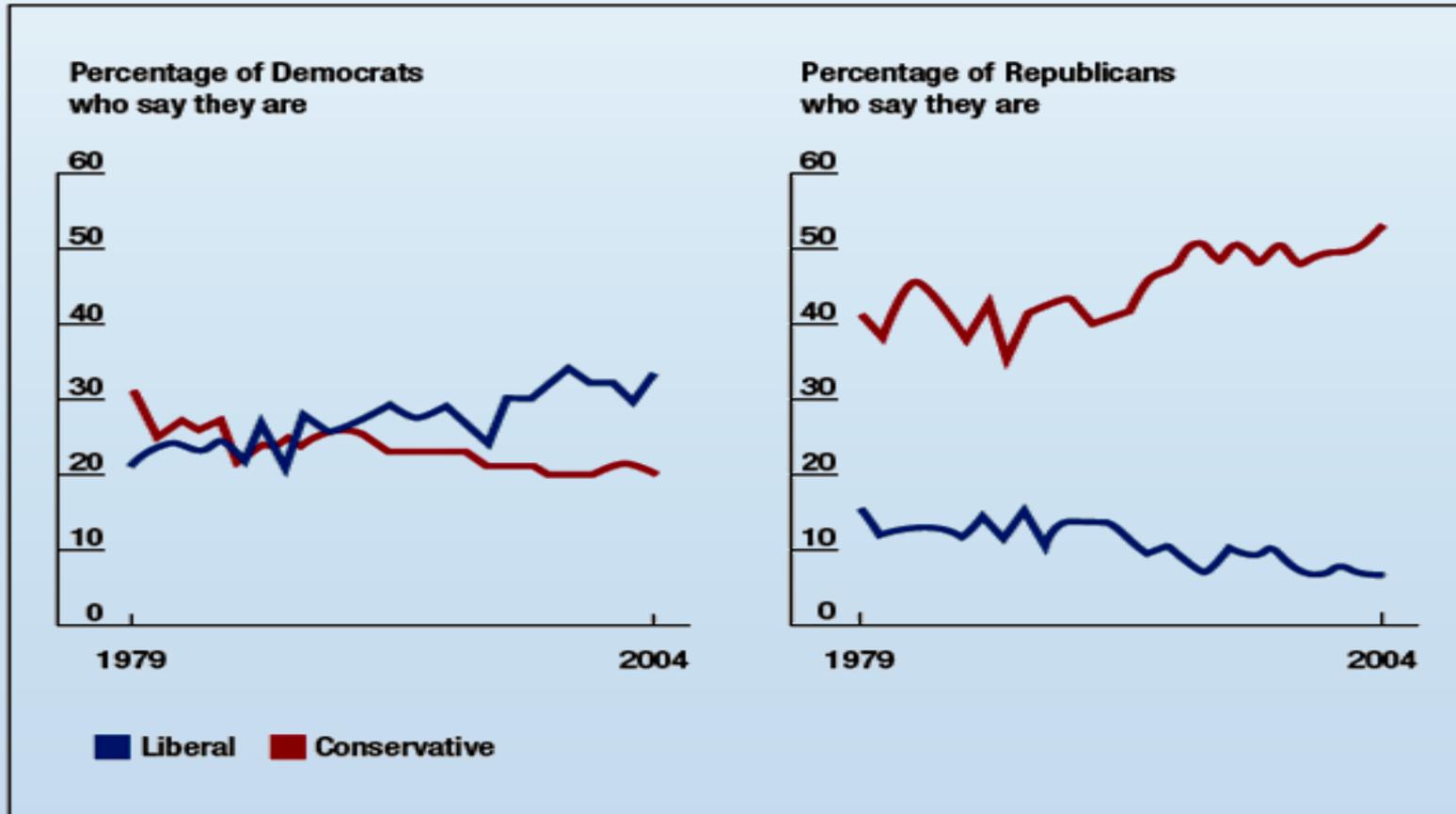


Parties and Ideology



- **Ideologies** such as conservatism, liberalism or libertarianism are **dedicated to the promotion of a specific set of ideals** and the ideas spawned by those ideals.
- **Political parties exist to provide the apparatus to elect candidates.**
- Political parties are made up of people motivated by specific ideologies and they work to influence the direction of the party.
 - Conservatives/Liberals dominate the primary process in the Republican/Democratic Party.
 - It's not that conservative/liberal activists don't care about electability ... They believe that conservatism/liberalism is what gets candidates elected.
- Tension results when a nominee isn't judged "ideologically pure enough" for an activist. Does that activist work for the good of the party at that point or decide that a specific ideology is more important?

The Growing Ideological Homogeneity of Party Identifiers



Party identification and political ideology are becoming more closely related. Republican identifiers, more conservative than Democratic Party identifiers anyway, are becoming even more conservative. At the same time, Democratic Party identifiers are becoming more liberal. The deep divide that reflects the confluence of parties and ideologies has become a key feature of modern American politics and contributes to much of the incivility and intensity of public affairs in recent years.

Ideology: Liberals and Conservatives

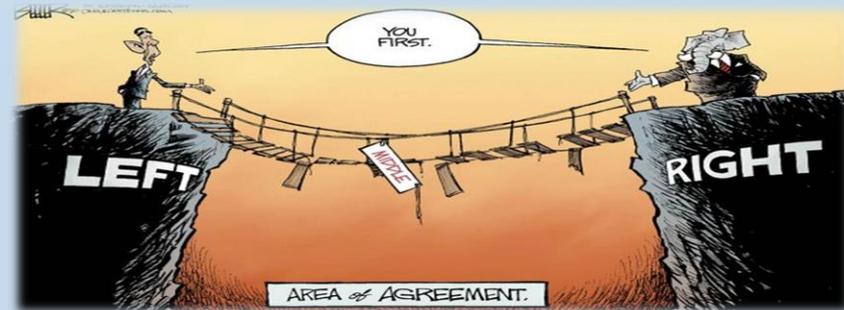


- **national security**: Conservatives usually favor a strong military, isolationism and unilateralism when dealing with foreign policy. Liberals favor an adequate military, internationalism and multilateralism when dealing with foreign policy and approve of working with international organizations such as the UN.
- **family values**: Conservatives usually favor a traditional family (marriage) raised with Judeo-Christian values and oppose abortion. Favor traditional social values. Liberals usually are more accepting of nontraditional families and alternative lifestyles, homosexuality and different cultures and religions. Liberals also believe in a woman's right to choose, favor civil liberties and equality.

Ideology: Liberals and Conservatives



- **social programs:** Conservatives usually believe in individual responsibility, private charities, privatized social security, private health coverage and private prescription drug insurance plans. Liberals favor government sponsored prescription drug programs, welfare, expanded Social Security, national health care and a social safety net.
- **economic policy:** Conservatives believe in a laissez-faire economy and a limited government role in the economy, free markets, low taxes and tax cuts, a balanced budget, and are tolerant of corporations. Emphasize economic liberty and freedom from government interference. Liberals favor government regulation of business and government spending for social programs. They believe in Keynesian economics, or a government role in the economy, government spending and deficits when necessary, and progressive taxes.



Problems with Political Labels



- can be misleading
 - destroys discussion
 - identity politics instead of addressing the underlying values of both beliefs and what we want to get done
- divisive: us vs. them attitude
- may not predict political opinions



NOT LEFT. NOT RIGHT.
NOT NOTHING.
NO
LABELS

- labels typically aren't adequate or accurate
- often opinions are mixed; conservative on some issues, liberal on others
- labels' meanings change over time
- cut across ideological boundaries

Partisan and Ideological Polarization



- The overall share of Americans who have consistently conservative or consistently liberal opinions has doubled over the past two decades from 10% to 21%.
- **Partisan animosity** has increased substantially over the same period. In each party, the share with a highly negative view of the opposing party has more than doubled since 1994.
- Many on both the left and the right think **the outcome of political negotiations** between Democratic and Republican leaders should be that their side gets more of what it wants.

Partisan and Ideological Polarization



- These sentiments are not shared by all – or even most – Americans. The **majority** does not have uniformly conservative or liberal views. Most do not see either party as a threat to the nation. And more believe their representatives in government should meet halfway to resolve contentious disputes rather than hold out for more of what they want. But the majority is relatively distant and disengaged.

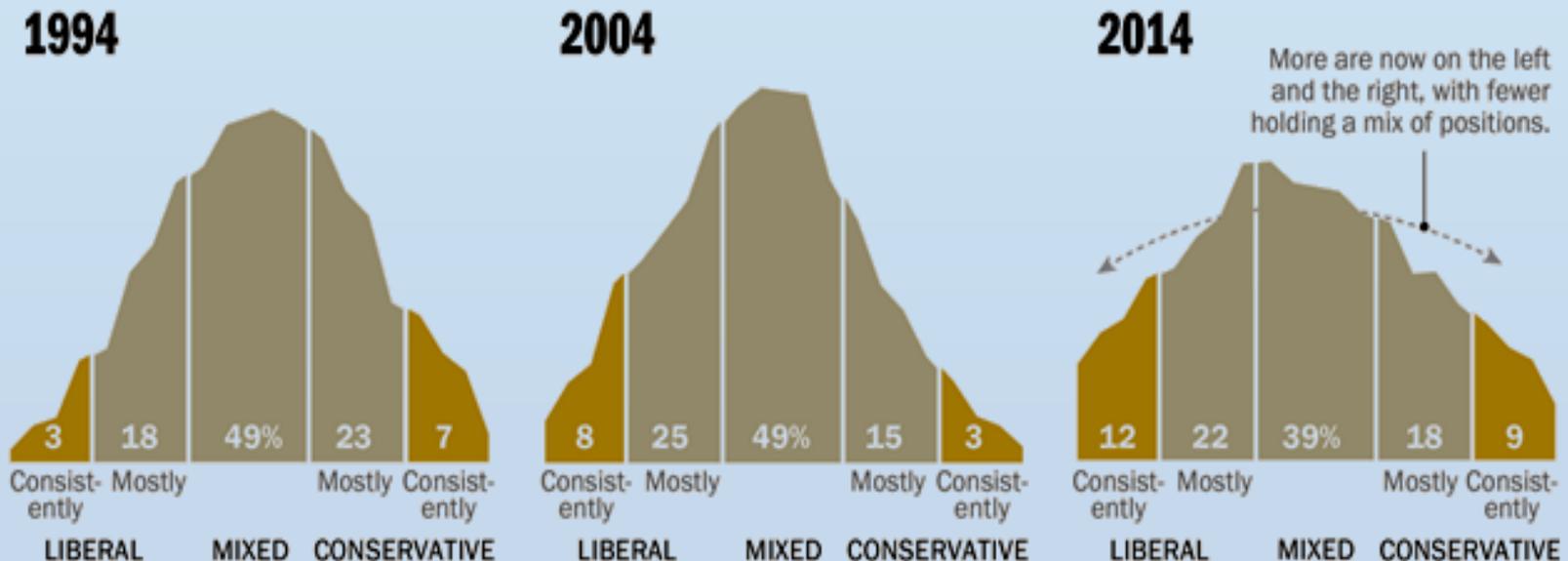


Over the past twenty years, the number of Americans on the **extremes** has doubled from 10% to 21%. The **center** has shrunk: 39% currently take a roughly **equal number of liberal and conservative positions**. That is down from about half (49%) of the public in 1994 and 2004.

Partisan and Ideological Polarization



- This shift represents both Democrats moving to the left and Republicans moving to the right, with less and less overlap between the parties. Liberals and conservatives share a passion for politics. They are far more likely than those with more mixed ideological views to discuss politics on a weekly or daily basis. But for many, particularly on the right, those conversations **may not include much in the way of opposing opinions.**
- **Political Polarization in the American Public**



Partisan and Ideological Polarization



- **partisan polarization**: growing distance between active partisans, hard to build the consensus needed to tackle big problems
- **center is shrinking**: fewer Americans in political middle, while more are taking sides on right and left
- people at **opposite ends of spectrum** are most politically active and have increasingly straight-ticket viewpoints
- various **issue groups** (foreign policy, social issues, economic issues, etc), many of which had very little correlation with each other in past, are increasingly aligned

'Is this issue something you want candidates to spend a lot of time talking about or not?'

Republicans

Issue	% yes
Budget deficit	94
National defense	93
Taxes	91
Terrorism	90
Job creation	86
Immigration	85
Trade	81

Democrats

Issue	% yes
Energy	92
Income inequality	90
Infrastructure	88
Job creation	86
Immigration	82
College costs	82
Climate change	81

Source: Bloomberg/Des Moines Register poll

Partisanship, Ideology and Issue Positions



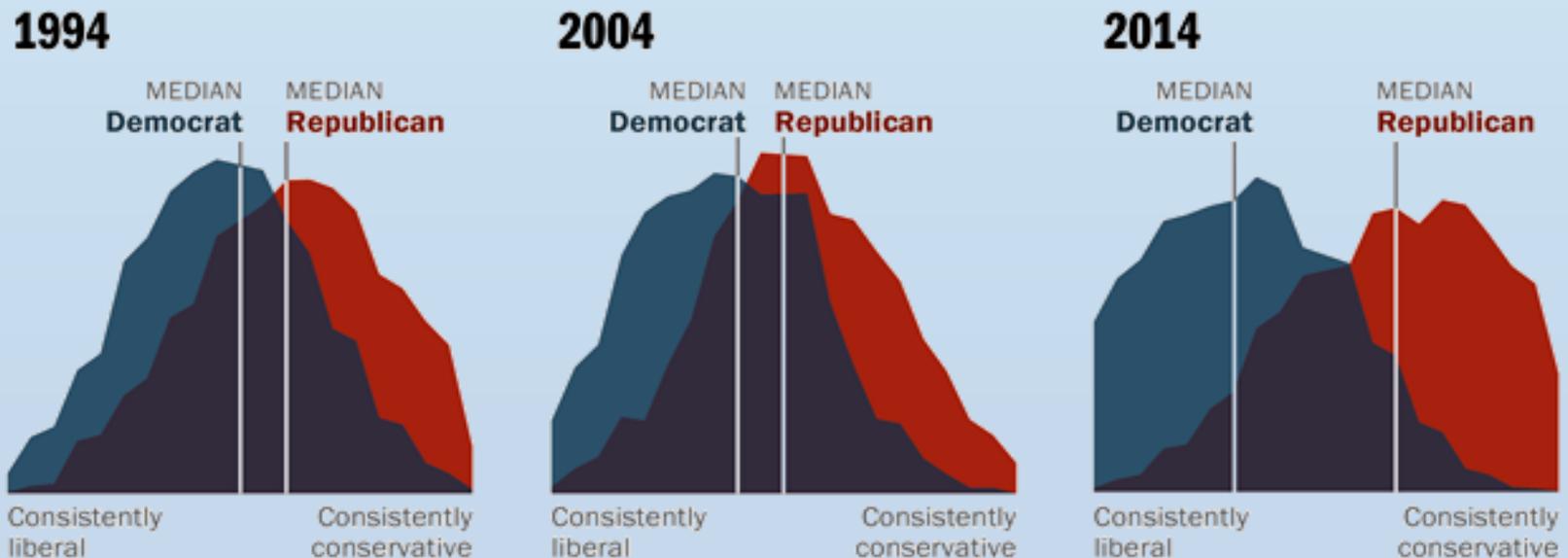
Opinion Sought	Democrats	Republicans
Government should make every effort to help blacks and other minorities, even if it means giving them preferential treatment.	55	24
Government should guarantee every citizen enough to eat and a place to sleep.	81	46
We have gone too far in pushing equal rights in this country.	34	55
The best way to ensure peace is through military strength.	44	69
We all should be willing to fight for our country, right or wrong.	46	62
Government is really run for the benefit of all the people.	46	70
Business corporations make too much profit.	72	46

Source: Evenly Divided and Increasingly Polarized: The 2004 Political Landscape (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, 2003).

Partisan and Ideological Polarization



- **ideological silos**: strong overlap between politics, lifestyle and choice of neighborhood ... less likely that Americans cross paths regularly with people who see world differently ... more and more *our side vs. their side*



Ideology and Party Organization



ideologies of party activists:

- **Political choices** are determined by a distinct class of politicians, party activists and interest group leaders, who have become **increasingly polarized** over economic, moral and religious ideology.
- War is between increasingly ideologically polarized political parties and their activists who aren't really even aware of each other's reasoning, with **most Americans being forced to choose between them.**



Ideology and Party Organization



ideologies of party activists:

- **Most Americans stand in the middle** of the political landscape and are in general agreement even on those issues thought to be most divisive ... They are both **moderate** and **tolerant** ... Their greatest concerns are **leadership and security**, not moral values.
- US is something close to an ambivalent nation which divides itself in political matters because there's no other choice when presented with highly divided options ... Relatively small differences have been magnified by the rhetoric used to present the issues to the public.

Ideology and Party Organization



ideology and policies in **party platforms**:

- Platforms reflect the consensus views of party leaders, activists and interest groups, which are more conservative/liberal than party voters, much less the public ... **not representative of public views.**
- The platform is actually written before the convention officially begins and is probably not a priority even for ordinary delegates.
- Party platforms and their specific planks are not a major factor in how voters make up their minds ... No one knows the details of the platforms.



Ideology and Party in the Government



- Congressional parties, after decades of relatively little polarization, began pulling apart in the mid-1970s. Congress is now **more polarized than at any time since the end of Reconstruction**.
- Voting in Congress is now **almost purely one-dimensional** ... political ideology accounts for about 93% of roll call voting choices in the House and Senate.
 - the disappearance of moderate-to-liberal Republican legislators (mainly in the Northeast) and conservative Democrat legislators (primarily in the South)
 - enact barely half as many substantive laws as in past
 - reluctant to compromise with the other side to start with and don't get much pressure from partisans back in their home states to do so

Ideology and Party in the Government



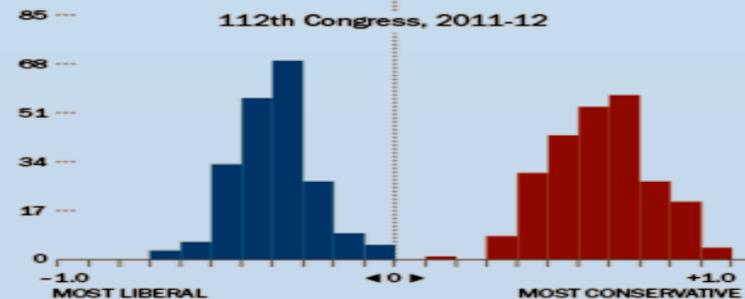
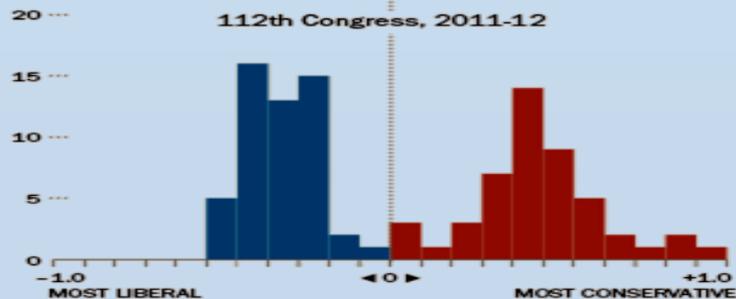
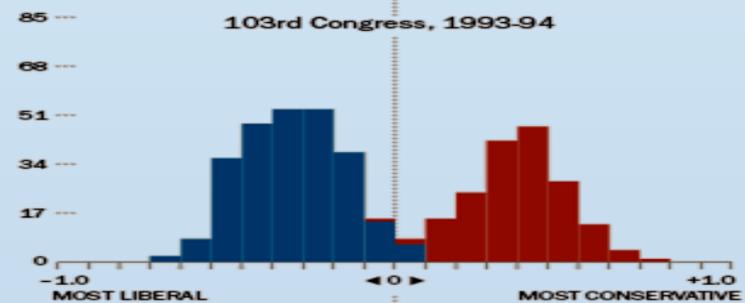
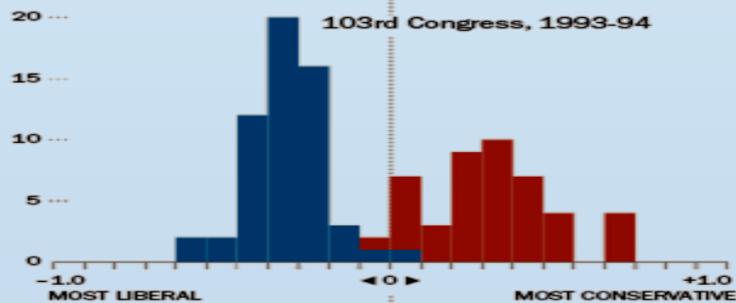
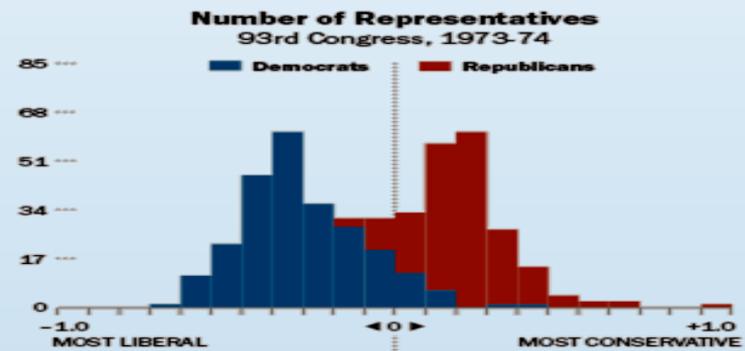
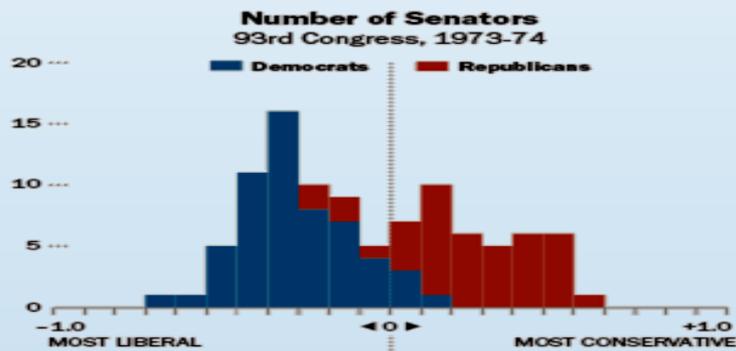
- Despite a wide array of issues facing legislators, over 81% of their voting decisions can be attributed to **consistent ideological positions** ranging from ultraconservatism to ultraliberalism.
- Voting patterns have maintained a **core stability based on two issues**: (1) the extent of government regulation of, and intervention in, the economy and (2) race.
- With Democrats and Republicans more ideologically separated than ever before, **compromises have become scarcer and more difficult to achieve**, contributing to Congress' inability to get much of consequence done.



Ideology and Party in the Government



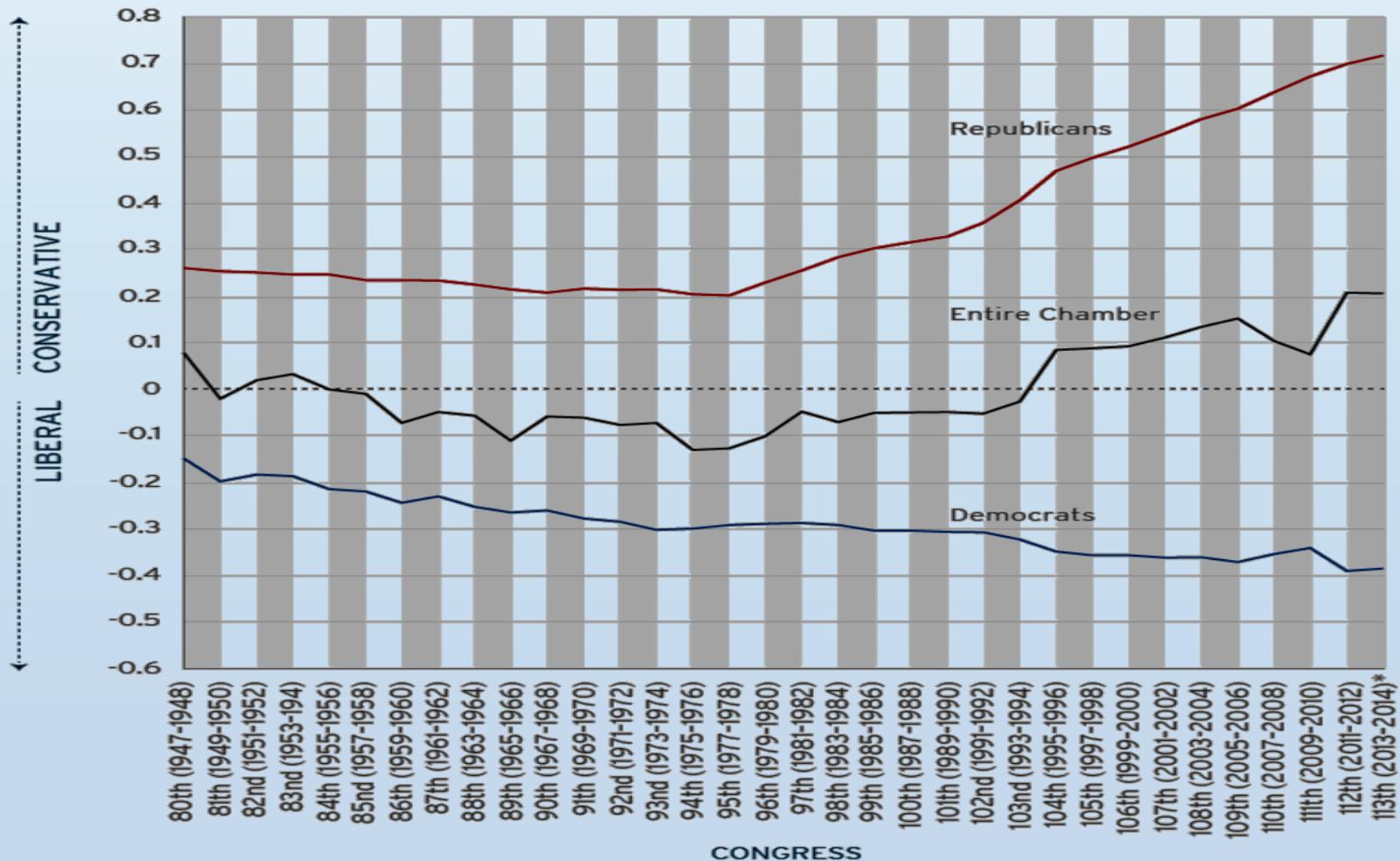
ideological scores of senators and representatives based on roll call votes
(negative numbers: liberal, positive numbers: conservative)



Ideology and Party in the Government



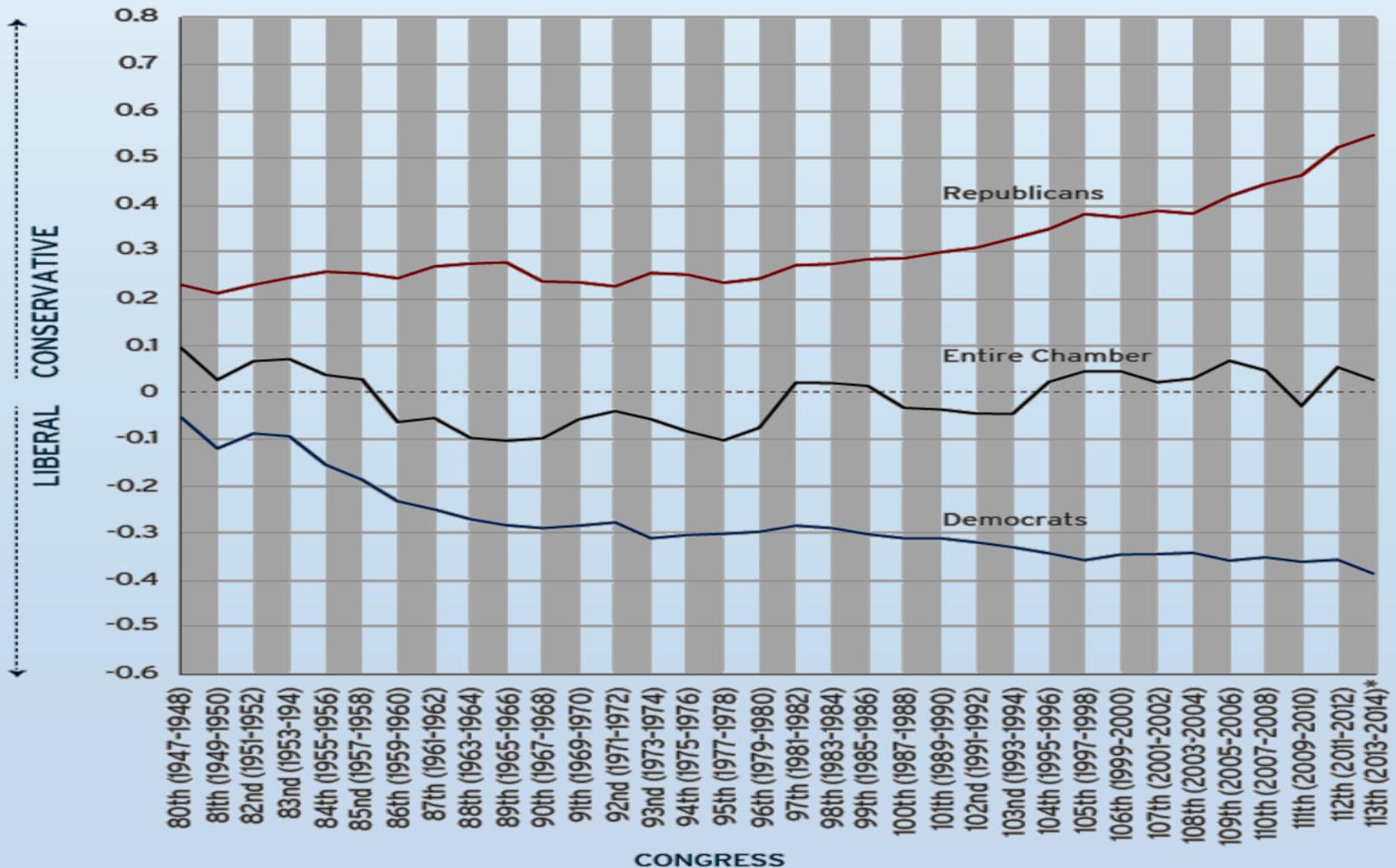
Average Ideological Positions of House Party Coalitions, 80th-113th Congresses, 1947-2014



Ideology and Party in the Government



Average Ideological Positions of Senate Party Coalitions, 80th-113th Congresses, 1947-2014



Ideology and Party in the Electorate

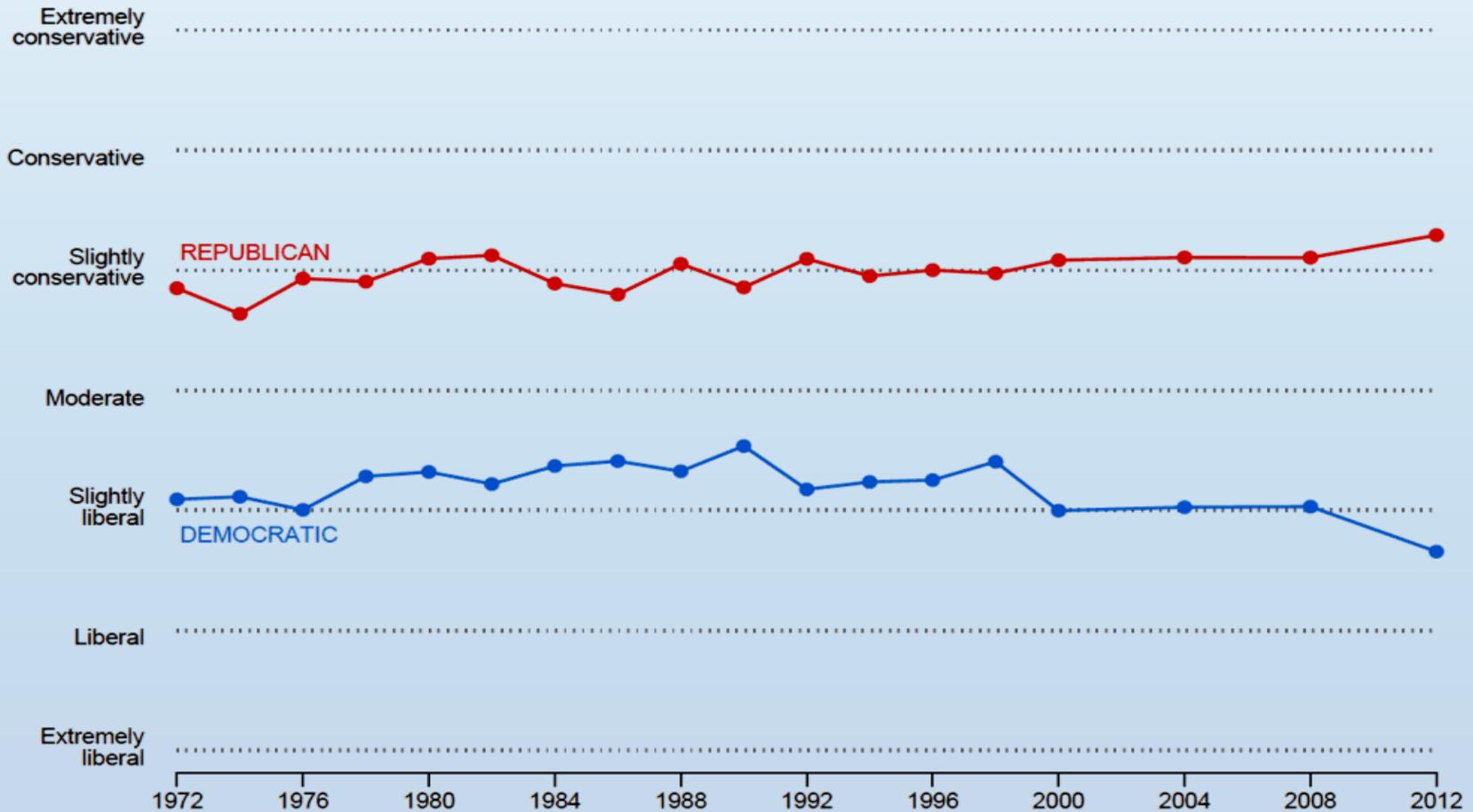


- The parties have changed a lot in the past 40 years, but voters don't really seem to have noticed.
- Little evidence that Americans perceived the Democratic Party's changes in the late 1980s-1990s, when the party moved to the center under the influence of the Democratic Leadership Council and Bill Clinton.
- **Little change in perceptions over time** ... Republican party perceived to be only slightly more conservative than it was *forty years ago* ... Democratic Party perceived to be as liberal as it was *when it nominated George McGovern*.
- Public doesn't see much of any shift in the parties but does seem to **disengage when confronted with increasingly narrow choices** put forth by party activists and officials.

Ideology and Party in the Electorate



How Americans Perceive the Ideologies of the Democratic and Republican Parties



Respondents were asked to place each party on a seven-point scale. Source: American National Election Studies. Graph by John Sides.

The End

