Ideology

“A liberal is a conservative who has been arrested.” (Tom Wolfe)

“A conservative is a liberal who has been mugged.” (Unknown)
Liberalism/Conservatism and Attitude Structure


- levels of conceptualization (NEXT SLIDE)
- issue constraint
- attitude stability / nonattitudes
Levels of Conceptualization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2000*</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideologues</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Near-Ideologues</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Benefits</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nature of the Times</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No issue Content</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*voters only

What Does It Mean to Be Liberal Or Conservative?

- 56% believe liberals favor cutting taxes or are not sure
- 50% believe conservatives support gun control or are not sure
- 46% think conservatives support affirmative action or are not sure
- 37% think liberals oppose gun control or are not sure
- 30% think conservatives oppose cutting taxes or are not sure
- 37% say “right-wingers” favor abortion or are not sure
- 41% say “left-wingers” oppose same-sex marriage or are not sure

From ANES 1988 (apparently not asked since): “People have different things in mind when they say that someone’s political views are liberal or conservative. What sorts of things do you have in mind when you say someone’s political views are . . . liberal? conservative?”

According to David RePass (*The Forum* 2008):

- almost 25 percent of those who placed themselves on the liberal side of the scale had no idea what “liberal” meant (20 percent for conservatives);
- 7 percent of both groups defined the concepts only in terms of personality (e.g., liberals were rash, irresponsible, open-minded, compassionate; while conservatives were cautious, decisive, closed-minded, intolerant);
- 17 percent of liberals and 11 percent of conservatives gave vague, overly generalized answers such as “conservatives resist change” or “liberals are generous and spend freely”; however . . .
- on the positive side, 52 percent of self-placed liberals and 62 percent of conservatives provided “at least some solid political or philosophical meaning to the terms” (RePass, p. 5).
Attitude Stability

Back to **Converse**: True attitudes, especially those that are held strongly, should be fairly stable over time (like party id, for example). Change may occur, but not very often – and not without cause.

**David RePass** on the seven-point self-placement question that was asked in both the pre- and post-election waves of the 2004 ANES:

- only 75 percent of those who placed themselves as liberal or conservative in wave 1 chose the same placement again in wave 2;
- 24 percent of those who said in wave 1 that they hadn’t thought about being a liberal or conservative chose suddenly became one in wave 2; and
- 21 percent of those who said in wave 2 that they hadn’t thought about being a liberal or conservative had indicated otherwise in wave 1.

For these individuals, ideological self-identification is obviously not a core element of their political identity.
Against this backdrop, let me pose two questions:

- What is the true ideological (specifically, liberal/moderate/conservative) makeup of the American electorate?

- Isn’t it true that the electorate, as a whole, has been drifting toward the conservative end of the spectrum over the past two or three decades?

Well . . . the second question is easier to answer than the first.
U.S. Political Ideology -- 1992-2011 Annual Averages

How would you describe your political views -- very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal, or very liberal?

Based on 20 Gallup and USA Today/Gallup polls conducted in 2011

GALLUP

http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1743/static-america-no-shift-political-values-elections; for trends by party, see table 3 of full report
OK, no trend here.

But there still are a lot more conservatives out there than there are liberals, right? And that’s been the case for awhile, right?

Yes, but don’t forget Philip Converse’s America: Many people don’t really know what these terms mean.

In fact, depending on question wording, you may get as many as 25-35 percent saying DK. (ANES opt-out: “where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven’t you thought much about this?”) And among those who are willing to pick a label or to place themselves on the 7-point scale, more than a few do so in error.

For example:
## Labels and Issue Positions

### Summary Position on Ten Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Rating</th>
<th>Very Liberal</th>
<th>Very Liberal</th>
<th>Very Center</th>
<th>Very Conserv</th>
<th>Very Conserv</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RePass’ Measure of Ideology

Based on self-placement (7-point scale), liberal/conservative feeling thermometers, and relative placement of the parties on the ideology scale, respondents in the 2004 ANES were classified as follows:

- Full-scale liberals (1 or 2 on the scale, warm toward L’s, cool toward C’s, recognized GOP as more conservative party): 6.2%
- Somewhat liberal (same but less definite: only slightly liberal on the scale or at the midpoint on one/both thermometers): 5.6%
- Middle of the road (consistently in the middle on all scales, never answered DK, knew the GOP was more conservative): 7.3%
- Somewhat conservative mirror image of somewhat liberal): 7.2%
- Full-scale conservative (mirror image of F-S liberals): 11.3%
- Non-ideological: 62.4%
RePass: Don’t call non-ideological people middle-of-the roaders. “They cannot be in the middle of the road since, for them, there is no road. They do not use ‘liberal’ or ‘conservative’ road signs [cues, short-cuts] to navigate the political landscape.”

Other observations by RePass:

- Politicians and the media overestimate the number of ideologues because they are the group most likely to be politically active.
- A majority of those who participate in presidential primaries/caucuses are actually non-ideologues. [still? data are from 1988/92]
- There was a steady but fairly modest increase in both full-scale C’s and (to a lesser extent) L’s from 1972-2004.
- Ideology and party id are related, but they aren’t the same thing . . .
The very idea of asking people to describe themselves as liberals or conservatives (or middle of the road), or of looking to see if their policy views are consistently one way or the other, is based on an assumption that is almost certainly not true: that political opinion is unidimensional.

From Repass (The Forum 2008):

**Figure 1**
Downs Normal Distribution Model

**Figure 2**
Downs Bipolar Distribution Model

Public opinion in 1950s?  Elite opinion since the 1930s? today?
Public Opinion in Two Dimensions

1. Liberals
   - **Who:** Economic liberals
   - **What:** Expanded government role in economy
     - Limited government role in social order
   - **Examples:** Welfare, national health care, maximum individual freedom (pro-choice, pro-gay rights, right to die), civil rights for immigrants

2. Libertarians
   - **Who:** Traditional economic conservatives, libertarians
   - **What:** Limited government role in economy
     - Limited government role in social order
   - **Examples:** Low taxes, laissez-faire capitalism, maximum individual freedom (pro-choice, anti-gun control), guest worker program

3. Communitarians?
   - **Who:** Social liberals, communitarians, radical feminists, environmentalists
   - **What:** Expanded government role in economy
     - Expanded government role in social order
   - **Examples:** Welfare, social programs, censorship of pornography, strict pollution controls, affirmative action

4. Conservatives
   - **Who:** Social conservatives, religious right
   - **What:** Limited government role in economy
     - Expanded government role in social order
   - **Examples:** Low taxes, prayer in school, censorship of books that violate traditional values, anti-gay rights, tight restriction on immigration

5. Moderates
   - **Belief in more government control of the economy (substantive guarantees)**
   - **Belief in less government control of individual lives and the social order (procedural guarantees)**

Group labels are suggested by Edward G. Carmines et al., “Political Ideology in American Politics: One, Two, or None?” The Forum (issue 3, 2012).
According to Carmines et al., there are at least three reasons why the self-placement measure should be used only sparingly and with great caution:

- **lots of missing data** (while the number of DKs has dropped in recent years, it’s still roughly 1/4 of all respondents in ANES surveys);
- it overestimates the proportion of the public that holds **true conservative opinions** on the issues (more on this shortly); and
- it assumes that ideology is **unidimensional** (the more you are of one, the less you are of the other), when clearly it is not.

The authors’ identification of two dimensions (only moderately correlated with one another, never higher than \( r = .5 \)), and of the five opinion types shown in the figure, is based on a factor analysis of all issue questions with either economic or social/cultural content in ANES surveys from 1972-2008.

Some people – though certainly not all – recognize this distinction and take it into account when describing their political views . . .
Self-Identification

Comparison of Ideological Identification on Social vs. Economic Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Identification</th>
<th>Social conservative</th>
<th>Social moderate</th>
<th>Social liberal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic conservative</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic moderate</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic liberal</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures are the percentage of the total sample with the ideological profile. Those who did not give an opinion on either question are not shown.

Gallup, May 3-6, 2012

Political Spectrum Quiz

53 questions (5-point scale, from disagree strongly to agree strongly; also, how much does this issue matter, 5 points from a lot to a little), including:

- Laws should restrict abortion in all or most instances.
- In nearly every instance, the free market allocates resources most efficiently.
- Some people should not be allowed to reproduce.
- Access to healthcare is a right.
- The rich should pay a higher tax than the middle class.
- School science classes should teach intelligent design.
- Sometimes war is necessary, even if it means you strike first.
- Government should do something about the increasing violence in video games.
- Strong gun ownership rights protect the people against tyranny.
- Gay marriage should be forbidden.
- Government should ensure that all citizens meet a certain minimum standard of living.
- Marijuana should be legal.
- An official language should be set, and immigrants should have to learn it.
- Unions were indispensable in establishing the middle class.

http://www.gotoquiz.com/politics/political-spectrum-quiz.html
Political Spectrum Quiz

All Quiz Takers
(February 2012)

Democrats

Republicans

http://www.gotoquiz.com/politics/political-spectrum-quiz.html
62 questions (4-point scale, from disagree strongly to agree strongly; no neutral category or measure of issue salience), including:

- I’d always support my country, whether it was right or wrong.
- Our race has many superior qualities, compared with other races.
- If economic globalisation is inevitable, it should primarily serve humanity rather than the interests of trans-national corporations.
- There is now a worrying fusion of information and entertainment.
- Protectionism is sometimes necessary in trade.
- The rich are too highly taxed.
- Those who are able to work, and refuse the opportunity, should not expect society’s support.
- Abortion, when the woman’s life is not threatened, should always be illegal.
- Good parents sometimes have to spank their children.
- Our civil liberties are being excessively curbed in the name of counter-terrorism.
- The death penalty should be an option for the most serious crimes.
- Mothers may have careers, but their first duty is to be homemakers.
- Astrology accurately explains many things.

http://www.politicalcompass.org/test
Political Compass Test

http://www.politicalcompass.org/test
Public Opinion in Multiple Dimensions

Based on survey questions that measure a person’s core values and underlying beliefs about what is right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable, or what the government should/should not be involved in – not opinions about specific political leaders, parties, or current issues.

Examples: Attitudes about government efficiency, waste, and regulation of business; religion and morality; environmentalism; impact of immigrants on American culture, jobs, and social services; racial discrimination; role of government in helping the needy; foreign policy assertiveness.

Party Consensus/Conflict

Party Affiliation and the Typology Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rep</th>
<th>Dem</th>
<th>Ind*</th>
<th>Rep/lean R</th>
<th>Dem/lean D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staunch Conservatives</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street Republicans</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libertarians</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaffecteds</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Moderns</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Coalition Dems</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hard-Pressed Dems</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid Liberals</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bystanders</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PEW RESEARCH CENTER 2011 Political Typology. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding. * Independent includes those who say they have no preference, volunteered another party, said they don’t know or refused to answer the party identification question.

How the Typology Groups Voted

PEW RESEARCH CENTER 2011 Political Typology. Based on registered voters.

http://people-press.org/2011/05/04/section-1-the-political-typology-2/
Ambivalent Americans: Ideological Conservatives, Operational Liberals

Americans as Ideological Conservatives

Perceptions of Government’s Role in Solving Nation’s Problems
Some people think the government is trying to do too many things that should be left to individuals and businesses. Others think that government should do more to solve our country’s problems. Which comes closer to your view?

Views on Government Regulation
In general, do you think there is too much, too little, or about the right amount of government regulation of business and industry?

Perceived Government Threat to Individuals
Do you think the federal government poses an immediate threat to the rights and freedoms of ordinary citizens, or not?

Americans’ Perceptions of Federal Government’s Power
Do you think the federal government today – [has too much power, has about the right amount of power, or has too little power]?

Gallup Poll 2010
### Perceptions of Government Size and Scope, by Party ID

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal government has too much power</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government doing too much</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much government regulation of business and industry</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal government poses immediate threat to individuals’ liberty</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

USA Today/Gallup, Sept. 13-16, 2010

**GALLUP**

Gallup Poll, October 2010

On the other hand . . .
Americans as Operational Liberals

Percent saying that government has either total or major responsibility (4 or 5 on a 5-point scale) for

- protecting Americans from foreign threats (94%)
- protecting consumers from unsafe products (76%)
- protecting the environment from human actions that can harm it (66%)
- preventing discrimination (67%)
- making sure all Americans have adequate healthcare (57%)
- making sure that all who want jobs have them (52%)

Gallup Poll, October 2010
Don’t Want Spending? Really?

**Reaction to Cutting Government Spending in Various Areas**

Next, please say whether you favor or oppose cutting government spending in each of the following areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Favor</th>
<th>Oppose</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign aid</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding for the arts and sciences</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aid to farmers</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeland security</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The military and national defense</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-poverty programs</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicare</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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</table>

USA Today/Gallup, Jan. 14-16, 2011

**Support for Cutting Federal Spending in Specific Areas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Republican/Lean Republican</th>
<th>Democrat/Lean Democrat</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign aid</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding for the arts and sciences</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aid to farmers</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeland security</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The military and national defense</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>-23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anti-poverty programs</td>
<td>46</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>Medicare</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

USA Today/Gallup, Jan. 14-16, 2011

GALLUP
Are we spending too much, too little, or about the right amount of money on . . . (% too little)?

- the environment (60%)
- improving and protecting the nation’s health (60%)
- law enforcement (48%)
- dealing with drug addiction (56%)
- education (74%)
- foreign aid (8%, 63% too much)
- assistance to the poor (not welfare, 68%)
- social security (67%)
- mass transportation (43%)
- highways and bridges (44%) . . . and so on and so forth

*General Social Survey, 2010*
symbolic ideology: the ideological label with which one most closely identifies

operational ideology: the sum of one’s views on specific matters of public policy, beliefs about what government should or should not be doing to solve specific problems

For most political sophisticates and elites, the two conceptions of ideology are logically connected to one another; these citizens are able to understand the explicitly political meanings of ideological terms and to use such terms (and the ideas they represent) to structure their own issue beliefs. [Remember Philip Converse’s levels of conceptualization?] However . . .
For many citizens, however, the two types of ideology are conceptually distinct. Ideological self-identification is principally developed from the reactions people have to broad, general concepts. In the United States, the meanings of the labels “liberal” and “conservative” are grounded in political symbols – the words, stereotypes, and social groups associated with each of the labels – rather than in specific policy options.

As a result, people without the political awareness to connect abstract ideological language to specific policy preferences often hold identifications that reflect affective attachments to the ideological labels themselves and to the symbols associated with those labels.
Operational views, by contrast, reflect citizens’ beliefs about the proper scope of government in various policy domains. These attitudes are driven largely by citizens’ thinking about the targets of intended policies, the contexts in which people confront social problems, the reasons for government intervention in specific domains, and the likely consequences of policy implementation – that is, by evaluations of the political context that are more specific and concrete than is symbolic ideology.

While there is evidence of an upswing in ideologically constrained thinking among the public (LATER), the tendency to think about symbolic and operational ideology in different ways is an enduring feature of American mass politics.
Symbolically, conservatives always outnumber liberals. When it comes to operational views, however, the public generally wants government to spend more to solve specific social problems, to take a more active role in regulating markets and redistributing wealth, and to do more rather than less to help the disadvantaged. This is not true on every issue all of the time, but the trend line for Stimson’s measure of public mood shows that liberals have always outnumbered conservatives (by varying amounts) at least since the early 1950s. (SEE NEXT SLIDE)

Operational and symbolic ideologies do share some common movement over time, which in part reflects a reaction by both series to the party in power, i.e., moving to the left when conservatives are in office, and to the right when liberals are in power. In short, the public typically provides negative feedback to the dominant direction of public policymaking.
Figure 5-1
Operational and symbolic liberalism in the American electorate. Sources: Public Policy Mood (Stimson 2004); Ideological Self-Identification (Ellis and Stimson 2008).

Symbolic ideology is not totally independent of citizens’ policy views. This figure shows that the more liberal (conservative) a person’s views on either cultural and scope-of-government issues, the greater the likelihood that s/he will express a liberal (conservative) self-id. This relationship is a little stronger for cultural issues, which suggests that these are easier for ordinary citizens to both understand and base decisions upon.

Note: While cultural issue preferences are better predictors of ideological identification, they are less effective at predicting party id. (NEXT SLIDE)

Nevertheless, the main point is that there is a clear disconnect in terms of the way citizens think about the two aspects of ideology . . .

In 1972, social/cultural issue preferences were not very strongly correlated with ideological self-identification. By the mid-1990s, they were a better predictor of self-id than preferences on New Deal-type economic issues.

In 1972, social/cultural issue preferences were basically unrelated to party id. That relationship has not become much stronger over the past 40 years. Party id is much more closely associated with citizens’ preferences on economic issues.

What accounts for this ideological disconnect? Ellis-Stimson suggest some possibilities, including . . .

- the esteem of the “conservative” label in nonpolitical contexts, and the desire of some politically unengaged citizens to identify themselves as conservatives even if that identification has little to do with politics
- the popularity of distributive social goals such as education, clean air, public health, and the realization among citizens that they will themselves derive benefits from specific social policies
- differences in elite framing of policy conflicts, as liberals tend to frame issues in terms of specific programs and problems, whereas conservatives tend to frame them in broad, symbolic (and for many people, more easily understandable and more readily embraced) terms
- the trashing (by conservative politicians and talking heads) of some symbols associated with “liberals” and “liberalism,” thereby making those symbols less palatable to citizens (and less likely to be embraced by liberal politicians) – but without reducing support for their policy objectives

I suspect that this last one might be the key . . .
One thing for sure: Whatever the reason, a lot of people are calling themselves conservatives who really aren’t. Some more evidence on this:

Data are from 2008 ANES. The average number of conservatives who want to increase spending (excluding foreign aid and welfare programs, I think, is 54 percent.

http://themonkeycage.org/2010/02/25/corrected_graph_for_conflicted/
OK, let’s talk about labels (symbols):

### Public favorability of major ideologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libertarian</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>+22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Demographic breakdowns of ideological ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Con</th>
<th>Mod</th>
<th>Lib</th>
<th>Prog</th>
<th>Dem</th>
<th>Ind</th>
<th>Rep</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Latino</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Con</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>89</td>
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<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lib</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libtrn</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prog</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
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Center for American Progress, *State of American Political Ideology, 2009* (pp. 45-46)
http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/03/political_ideology.html
Liberal-conservative identification should be viewed as a statement of group consciousness – a declaration of group loyalty similar to the way we think about party id; that loyalty is likely to be shaped largely by one’s evaluations of the two major ideological labels or groups, i.e., liberals and conservatives.

Analysis of 1976 ANES shows that thermometer scores for liberals and conservatives (negatively correlated, but not strongly) were more closely associated with self-placement than were opinions on most issues. What did these ratings reflect? Positive attitudes toward liberals were primarily a function of positive feelings toward the radical left and the reformist left, negative sentiments toward capitalism, and economic liberalism (issues). Positive attitudes toward conservatives were primarily a function of positive affect toward capitalism, the status quo, and social control, plus racial conservatism. Bottom line: Symbols were more important than issues in defining the meaning of both liberalism and conservatism.

Basically an update of Conover-Feldman using 2004 ANES data (and with feeling thermometers for a broader array of social groups).

- ideological id was once again greatly influenced by the liberal and conservative thermometers, even more so than in 1976 (although the negative correlation between these two remained modest);
- evaluations of conservatives → self-id more than evaluations of liberals, opposite of what was found in 1976 (due to the GOP being in power?);
- group affect → self-id more than issues, e.g., labor unions, feminists, environmentalists (and to a lesser extent illegal immigrants, gays and lesbians, people on welfare) → feelings toward liberals; Christian fundamentalists, big business, the military (and to a lesser extent middle-class people, the elderly, whites) → feelings toward conservatives. And just for the record, group affect was not strongly linked to people’s issue views.
A Different Take on Ambivalence

Stanley Feldman and John Zaller, "The Political Culture of Ambivalence: Ideological Responses to the Welfare State," *AJPS* (1992). Using an open-ended probe to the standard Jobs/SOL question asked in the 1987 ANES pilot study, the authors found considerable evidence of multiple (often conflicting) considerations, esp. among liberals (though conservatives might be more ambivalent on other issues, e.g., relating to civil liberties or maybe the environment).

Stephen C. Craig, James G. Kane, and Michael D. Martinez, "Sometimes You Feel Like a Nut, Sometimes You Don't: Citizens' Ambivalence about Abortion," *Political Psychology* (2002). Measured ambivalence using an approach developed by social psychologists. Results showed the overall level of ambivalence (simultaneously having positive and negative views ≠ having multiple considerations) about abortion among Florida voters to be fairly modest – but it did exist, even on this issue about which so many people have passionate views, and there was an interesting twist . . .
Step 1: Begin with a battery of questions that has been asked on a recurring basis in GSS surveys since 1972: “Please tell me whether or not you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if . . .”

- there is a strong chance of serious defect in the baby
- she is married and does not want any more children
- the woman’s own health is seriously endangered by the pregnancy
- the family has a very low income and cannot afford anymore children
- she became pregnant as a result of rape
- she is not married and does not want to marry the man
- the woman wants it for any reason

Support was very high (75-89% in 1998 GSS, and in 1998/1999 Florida surveys) for what we called abortion under traumatic circumstances: mother’s health, rape, and birth defect. Support was much lower (35-44% in the three surveys) for what we labeled elective abortion.
Step 2: “I’m now going to read a series of statements about abortion. After each, I’d like you to rate each statement on a 4-point scale to indicate how positively you feel toward the statement. If you do not have any positive feelings toward the statement, give the statement the lowest rating of 1; if you have some positive feelings, rate it a 2; if you have generally positive feelings, rate it a 3; and if you have extremely positive feelings, rate it a 4. Please rate each statement based solely on how positively you feel about it, while ignoring or setting aside for the moment any negative feelings you may have for the statement. The first statement is, A woman should be able to obtain a legal abortion if . . .” [read 7 GSS conditions]

Step 3: Repeat the above, substituting “negative” and “negatively” for “positive” and “positively.” [read 7 GSS conditions] Note: There was some filler placed between these three question batteries. Findings:

- as above, ambivalence was present but not widespread;
- those with pro-life views on the original GSS battery tended to be more ambivalent about traumatic abortions, while
- those with pro-choice views were more ambivalent about elective abortions. Makes sense, doesn’t it?

Same basic intro, positive and negative feelings about each of eight statements:

- Homosexuals should be allowed to teach in schools.
- Marriages between homosexuals should be recognized as legal.
- Homosexuals should be allowed to serve in the United States military.
- Homosexuals should be legally permitted to adopt children.
- What homosexuals do in the privacy of their own homes is nobody else’s business.
- There should be laws to protect homosexuals against discrimination in their jobs.
- Homosexuals should be allowed to join the Boy Scouts and other youth organizations.
- Homosexual couples should be able to obtain family health insurance coverage, the same way other people do.

Again, two dimensions: Positive feelings were more common with what we called adult roles (military, privacy, discrimination, insurance) than with aspects relating to families and children (teach, marriage, adopt, Boy Scouts).

Positive and negative feelings about “the kinds of things some people think the government should be doing to address certain problems that are facing the country.” Specifically, the government should . . .

- ensure that every citizen has adequate medical insurance
- provide programs to help homeless people find a place to live
- ensure that every child has access to a good education
- provide programs that improve the standard of living of poor Americans
- see to it that everyone who wants a job has one
- provide childcare programs to assist working parents
- ensure that the retirement benefits that citizens have built up over the years are protected

Only a single dimension was evident this time.

So Where Does This Leave Us?

- There are meaningful differences (in the aggregate) between self-identified liberals and conservatives, but those differences are not always large. Most people who say they are one or the other are not ideologues at all in any strict sense.

- Many Americans are “symbolic conservatives,” while at the same time being “operational liberals” in terms of supporting higher (or at least not lower) levels of government spending in a broad range of program areas.

- Faced with problems and issues that are complex, and that often involve competing values/priorities (e.g., abortion, the environment, immigration, and others), many people – including those who are self-described liberals and conservatives – have mixed feelings, that is, they are ambivalent.
Looking Into the Future: Demography Is Not Destiny

1988: Democratic presidential nominee Michael Dukakis receives 40% of the white vote, loses the election to George Bush (46% to 53% popular vote, 111 to 426 electoral vote)

2012: Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama receives 39% of the white vote, wins re-election against Mitt Romney (51% to 48% popular vote, 332 to 205 electoral vote)

Conclusion: Not only did the nation’s changing demographics account for Obama’s win in 2012, but they make Democrats the odds-on favorite to maintain control of the presidency for years to come. Well . . . maybe, or maybe not.
Demography and the New Democratic Majority

However, the Third Way report identifies what it calls seven illusions of the new Democratic Coalition.

### Composition of Electorate in Presidential Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian†</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Exit Polls

### 2012 Voting Patterns by Selected Demographic Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Voted for Obama</th>
<th>Voted for Romney</th>
<th>Obama - Romney</th>
<th>% of Electorate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>-20</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Men</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>-27</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>+11</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Women</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>-14</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>+87</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>+44</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>+47</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–29 years old</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>+23</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+ years old</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>-12</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Exit Poll
Illusion #1: The New Electorate Is Predominantly Liberal

2011

Hispanics
- 32%
- 30%
- 31%

Asians
- 24%
- 31%
- 37%

General Population
- 34%
- 21%
- 39%

Ideology by Generation 1996-2011

- Liberal
- Moderate
- Conservative

Source: Pew Research Center for the People & the Press
Illusion #2: Millennials’ Ideology Will Be Stable Over the Course of Their Lives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Highest Percent of Identifiers</th>
<th>Lowest Percent of Identifiers</th>
<th>High-Low Difference</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silent</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boomer</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen X</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennial</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

Conclusion: People’s attitudes change.
Illusion #3: Hispanic, Asian, and Millennial Voters Will Remain Loyal to the Democratic Party

The data on Millennials, Hispanics, and Asians suggests that partisan attachments appear to be neither particularly strong nor necessarily durable. While there is a vocal minority of partisan activists among these groups who will likely remain loyal partisans, the number of Independents challenges the assertion that a permanent attachment has taken root outside of the Party base.

What the teacher says: These people probably should read the literature on party identification more closely (regarding its origins, stability, and measurement).
Illusion #4: Millennials Deeply Believe In and Support and Activist Government

**Government Guaranteeing Food & Shelter**

% agree government should guarantee every citizen enough to eat and a place to sleep

- Greatest
- Silent
- Boomer
- Gen X
- Millenial

Source: Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

**Helping the Needy**

% agree it is the responsibility of the government to take care of people who can’t take care of themselves

- Greatest
- Silent
- Boomer
- Gen X
- Millenial

Source: Pew Research Center for the People & the Press
Illusion #5: The Culture Wars Are Over

In one area, many Democrats are certain they’ve already won the Millennial Generation for good: the culture wars. Proponents of this view argue that gay equality is a proxy for the culture wars broadly, and that Millennials aren’t buying what the Right is selling. They note the vast differences between Millennials and Silents, as well as between whites—particularly white males—and nonwhites and women. But beyond gay equality, the evidence that the culture wars are dead is mixed, at best.
Other cultural/social issues about which public opinion remains divided include: gun control, the death penalty, illegal immigration, affirmative action (e.g., using race as a factor in university admissions), voting rights (again), free exercise of religious beliefs, and issues related to contraception and birth control (e.g., whether employer health plans should provide coverage at no cost, incl. religiously-affiliated colleges and hospitals).
Illusion #6: Hispanic and Asian Voters are Homogenous

“... a considerable range of opinion is found within these communities, with patterns emerging based on time in the U.S. Hispanics and Asians born in the U.S. or who are a third generation (or longer) American tend to display attitudes more in line with the national average. For example, 81% of recent immigrants and 72% of 2nd generation Hispanics support a bigger government with more services, but only 58% of third-generation Hispanics agree with that statement. As people integrate into communities, they may also assimilate prevalent values. In doing so, these communities could become swing voters, like Catholics, rather than a more homogenous group who overwhelmingly support one party.”

True enough – but such assimilation is likely to happen only over a period of decades. If theories of generational change are correct, what you are and what you think when you are young is likely to remain what you are and what you think throughout your life (good news for the Democrats, at least in the short term).
Illusion #7: The Presidential Map Will Continue to Favor Democrats

In detailing why the key growing demographic groups are so important in elections, the proponents of the idea that demography equals destiny for Democrats note that these growing groups of voters are geographically situated in purple states. Thus, they say, these contested states will turn reliably blue in upcoming elections, locking up the Electoral College for the foreseeable future for the Democratic Party. But that analysis also assumes that once states go blue, they won’t ever go red. That is, progressive dominance spreads but never retreats. And it presumes that swing states which have historically leaned toward the Democratic Party will continue to do so in the future—regardless of their own demographic shifts.

Again, the literature on party id suggests that demographic changes will indeed turn some previously red or purple states reliably blue – though “locking up” the electoral college for the Democrats is putting it too strongly. Moreover, no one should claim that once blue, a state “won’t ever go red” – just that it may take a period of time for that to happen consistently.