XIV

Issue Preferences, Civic Engagement, and the Transformation of American Politics

Edward G. Carmines, Michael J. Ensley, and Michael W. Wagner

American political parties have undergone a fundamental transformation during the last several decades. Once seen as ideologically mixed and lacking well-defined policy positions, the modern Democratic and Republican parties have staked out clearly articulated, ideologically oriented policy positions across a wide range of issues.[1] Indeed, the growing polarization between the two major political parties is the major story of the past forty years of American party politics. While partisan polarization at the elite level is arrayed along a single ideological dimension separating liberals (on the left end of the spectrum) from conservatives (on the right end of the spectrum), the American citizenry does not organize its preferences as neatly—some citizens hold ideologically consistent opinions on most issues, while many others have more mixed, or, "heterogeneous," views, adopting liberal positions on some issues and conservative views on others.[2] Still others hold moderate views on the major policy questions of the day.[3] Thus, determining whether the increasing polarization of political elites has produced a more polarized citizenry is the subject of much discussion and debate among political scientists, political observers, and politicians themselves.[4] It turns out that the political divisions between individuals are not so easily—or accurately—summed up by calling "red state" voters conservatives and "blue state" voters liberals, and then concluding that the electorate is dangerously polarized with no one having views that are between these more extreme attitudes.

The question we address in this chapter is whether party polarization among elected officials has shaped the political engagement of American citizens. Do citizens who choose to engage in politics increasingly reflect the policy preferences of their respective party elites? And if so, where does this leave those citizens—the moderates, libertarians, and populists—who do not fit neatly into this ideological competition?

We explore these questions because one of the traditional exemplifiers of the health of American democracy is the level at which the citizenry

participates in the political system. Verba and Nie embody this perspective, claiming that "the question of who participates in political decisions becomes the question of the nature of democracy in a society."[5] Indeed, several scholars have investigated questions seeking to explain who engages in political participation, finding answers that sometimes corroborate, complement, or contradict each other.[6] Regardless of what scholars find vis-à-vis the factors that influence political participation, the underlying assumption of the lion's share of research in this area is that participation is a good thing.

Morris Fiorina questions this assumption, claiming that Americans who have extreme views are the most likely people to participate in political activities, giving an unrepresentative, extremist-view-holding sample of the electorate disproportionate control over public political decision-making.[7] In Fiorina's view, this relatively small band of radicals is responsible for the mistaken perception of a public "culture war." While agreeing that those with more extreme views have increased their political participation in recent years, Alan Abramowitz[8] argues that the number of politically polarized Americans is of a significant size after all, providing evidence indicating that nearly half of all self-identified Democrats and Republicans are "active citizens." Perhaps more striking, Abramowitz lists a quarter of Republican and Democratic identifiers as "campaign activists"—people who tackle a number of political activities in an election cycle.

Concomitantly, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse argue that too much democratic participation might not be a good thing after all—not because the extremists are the chief participators—but because many Americans are not interested in politics, are quick to abandon democratic values, and do not have a realistic understanding of how politics works.[9] More generally, Theiss-Morse and Hibbing contend that we should not expect all citizens to be equally enthralled with the process of political participation because "[m]aking collective decisions in the context of heterogeneous opinions is a challenging and frustrating experience, one that many people could do without."[10]

In this chapter, we do not try to adjudicate directly between these competing claims about the normative value of political participation. Instead, we offer a new perspective on political participation that has its roots in an elite-driven theory of political behavior. We argue that as the parties have become increasingly ideologically distinct from one another, with the Republican Party's representatives in Washington maintaining[11] conservative positions on social as well as economic issues and the Democratic Party's congressmembers advocating the opposite pair of issue alternatives, there is an increased tendency for *voters* with issue preferences that match these party positions to engage in a higher level of

political participation than citizens whose preferences do not reflect these party positions. Those who are "ideologically consistent"—that is, people holding the same broad issue positions offered by partisan elites (elected officials in each party)—should find participation less challenging and frustrating, recalling Theiss-Morse and Hibbing's phrasing, than those whose own preferences have no clear partisan home; as such, ideologically consistent people should be more willing to participate in political activities.

In order to investigate this hypothesis, we map voter preferences onto two broad domestic policy dimensions, one focusing on economic issues and the other on social issues. Using data from the American National Election Studies (ANES) from 1972 to 2004, we find that the consistency of voters' positions on these two issue dimensions has a significant impact on their likelihood of participating in campaign activities. People who have orthodox issue positions—consistently conservative or consistently liberal preferences on both economic and social issues—participate in more campaign activities such as displaying a yard sign, attending a rally, and trying to influence others' votes. However, Americans holding a heterodox (inconsistent) combination of preferences—a liberal position on economic issues and a conservative position on social issues or vice versa—participate in fewer activities. Further, citizens who have moderate centrist views on economic and social issues tend to participate in fewer campaign activities than liberals and conservatives. That is, we find that moderates, populists, and libertarians donate money, work for campaigns, and the like much less frequently than liberals and conservatives. On the other hand, our findings also indicate that when it comes to voter turnout, the consistency of issue preferences does not seem to be the driving force steering citizens to the polls.[12] Finally, with regard to both campaign participation and turnout, we demonstrate that ideological populists (those who prefer government intervention and regulation on both economic and social issues) are the most negatively impacted by the contemporary elite partisan divide.

It is worth pointing out that while the term "consistent" has a positive connotation and "inconsistent" has a negative one, we do not mean to make normative judgments about the intelligence or usefulness of people's issue preferences across economic and social issues. We simply use these terms to help us understand which citizens have views that are consistent with the partisan issue options offered by elected officials in Washington and which citizens have views that are not perfectly suited to either major political party.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, we present our argument about why we believe people's issue preferences should affect their political participation. Second, we present over thirty years of evidence from

the ANES to test our hypotheses about ideological consistency and political participation. Finally, we summarize our results and discuss their implications with respect to understanding both contemporary and the future of American politics.

Issue Dimensions and Political Participation

American party elites have grown increasingly polarized along a single broad ideological dimension during recent decades.[13] Today, congressional Republicans are more conservative than congressional Democrats on long-standing economic and social welfare issues related to taxing and spending as well as more recent social issues like abortion and gay rights. The ideological divide between elite partisans now spans virtually the entirety of the domestic policy agenda. Indeed, Republican elected officials prefer tax cuts, an end to legal abortion in order to protect the life of a fetus, and the protection of traditional marriage, and they oppose government-sponsored health care reform. At the same time, Democrats in high office prefer higher taxes on the wealthy, promote a woman's right to choose, support increased gay rights, and desire broad health care reform.

Even so, political conflict—from the perspective of the public—cannot be reduced to a single ideological dimension.[14] In their comprehensive analysis, Shafer and Claggett[15] show that two "deep" issue dimensions exist in the American public. The first dimension focuses on the economic and social welfare issues that dominated the domestic issue agenda during the New Deal era. These issues deal with the government's role in managing the economy and providing for the general welfare, such as taxes, spending on health care, social security, and welfare. More recently, racial issues dealing with aid to minorities and affirmative action have largely fused onto the economic dimension,[16] even though racial issues were explicitly suppressed by FDR because they cross-cut economic issues at the outset of the New Deal.[17] Regardless, the common thread linking these issues together is that they deal with regulation and distribution, focusing on the role that government should play in a market economy.[18]

The second dimension, which entered the arena of elite political debate in the late 1960s, deals with cultural, or moral, values including issues like abortion, gay rights, and prayer in public schools. These issues are bound by their common concern for the implementation of American values, values that define appropriate social behavior.[19] These two issue dimensions have become incorporated into a single broad ideological dimension for party elites, but they remain largely separate and distinct for the mass electorate.[20]

As partisan elites have become increasingly polarized over the past several decades,[21] there has been renewed interest in whether citizens are similarly divided. Hetherington[22] argues that partisans in the electorate have responded to elite polarization with polarization of their own. Fiorina (2005) disputes that claim, arguing that only a very small percentage of the electorate is strongly divided. We argue that, in a way, both Hetherington and Fiorina are correct.[23] Citizens who have issue preferences that are liberal on economic issues *and* social issues have become increasingly polarized from people who have consistently conservative issue preferences along both dimensions.[24] We call these citizens "consistent liberals" and "consistent conservatives," respectively. Voters with consistently liberal or conservative issue preferences, however, constitute only a portion of the entire American electorate. A nontrivial portion of the electorate has moderate centrist views on most political issues, even on such contentious issues as abortion and gay rights—a situation that has not changed dramatically in recent years.[25] As Fiorina observes, "reports of an American population polarized around moral and religious issues, or any other issue for that matter, are greatly exaggerated."[26] Since issue moderates find themselves wedged between an increasingly liberal Democratic Party and an increasingly conservative Republican Party, they should be less likely to have strong partisan identifications and vote straight party tickets.[27] Moreover, while they may not be less likely to vote, they should be less likely to be drawn into intense campaign activity than liberals and conservatives.

Nor should citizens, we argue, with inconsistent positions across the economic and social issue dimensions be as likely to spend their time and money supporting a candidate whose issue preferences may match those of these citizens only along one issue dimension. As party elites have increasingly polarized in a consistently liberal or conservative direction, citizens with libertarian (voters who hold conservative positions on economic and social welfare issues but liberal positions on social or cultural issues) and populist (voters who hold liberal positions on social welfare issues but conservative positions on social issues) views have become increasingly cross-pressured, preferring the Republican Party position on one issue dimension but the Democratic Party position on the other issue dimension. For example, a libertarian might hold pro-choice views on abortion (like the Democrats) but prefer lower taxes (like the Republicans). Thus, compared to people who are consistently liberal or consistently conservative, we should not expect inconsistent citizens to participate in as many political activities because the candidates they would be supporting would agree with them on only one of the two major issue dimensions. The same logic should hold true for moderates, as compared to consistent liberals and conservatives. Without strong,

well-defined preferences across both major issue dimensions, moderates ought to be less interested—and thus, less motivated—to participate in political activities.

The ANES asks respondents several questions about their political involvement that we can use to help test our theory, including whether they post a yard sign for a candidate, try to influence others about the upcoming election, donate money to a candidate, or work/volunteer for a candidate. Consistent with Fiorina's view of the "dark side of civic engagement," we expect consistent liberals and conservatives to be more likely to engage in these activities than libertarians, populists, and moderates.[28] Regarding the act of voting itself, our expectations are not as neat. In general, we believe that the consistency of citizens' issue preferences should not be a determining factor in their decision to head to the polls. While those with consistent preferences should be likely to vote, libertarians and populists, all else equal, may find one issue dimension more salient than the other in general or in a particular election cycle, equally prompting them to vote.[29] Moreover, compared to campaign activities, the act of voting is less costly and demanding, and for this very reason, its exercise may depend less on the match between citizens' views on social and economic issues and elite party positions.

Miller and Schofield claim that major changes in American politics are heavily influenced by how policy-driven partisan activists and vote-seeking political elites target disaffected (and typically extreme) voters operating in a two-dimensional issue space. They argue that the end of the twentieth century saw an increase in the salience of conflict along the social issues dimension as political elites engaged in "flanking moves" to win the hearts and minds of previously disaffected voters. If they are correct, the degree of consistency between citizens' issue preferences need not be the primary driving force in their decisions about turning out to vote; simply making one of the two major dimensions "active" may be enough to encourage citizens to go to the polls.

Data, Variables, and Analyses

We analyze two aspects of participation: turnout and involvement on campaign-related activities. Turnout in the analyses reported here is simply whether the individual reported voting in the general election. To measure campaign participation (other than turnout), we aggregated a series of survey questions about political activities. In every ANES survey between 1972 and 2004, respondents were asked if they (1) attempted to influence another person's vote; (2) worked for a political campaign; (3) displayed a campaign sign, bumper sticker, etc.; (4) attended a politi-

cal meeting; or (5) made a monetary campaign contribution. We added together the responses to these questions to create a six-point political action scale, where the modal category is 0 and the yearly mean ranges between 0.6 and 0.9 (with a standard deviation between 0.9 and 1). For the reader interested in our statistical techniques, our dependent variable is not technically a count variable because the number of actions is bounded from below and above (i.e., it is a proportion, or the number of activities engaged in of the five possible activities), but the skewed distribution of the dependent variable closely approximates a count variable. Thus, we chose to estimate the model using a negative binomial regression model because there is evidence of overdispersion.

To examine the relationship between issue preferences and political participation over time, we need to develop measures of our two issue dimensions. We identified any issues within each ANES survey from 1972 to 2004 that pertained to either the Social Welfare or Cultural issue dimension. This chapter's appendix provides a description of the survey questions used, the multiple imputation procedure used to handle the missing data, and the confirmatory factor analysis procedure we used to create the scores for respondents on each issue dimension. The scores are created such that higher values indicate a more conservative position. Further, the factor scores are standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.

Using the factor scores for the two issue dimensions, we can examine which citizens are most likely to participate in campaign activities and which citizens are most likely to vote. Given that we must distinguish between those individuals who have mixed positions across the two dimensions and those who have consistent positions, as well as the voters that have moderate positions, we include two additional variables in the regression models reported here. First, we multiply the Social Welfare and Cultural variables together. Since both variables are centered at zero, an individual that is either conservative or liberal on both dimensions will have high values for the interaction variable. For the heterodox citizens, who are liberal on one dimension yet conservative on the other, they will have low, negative values for the interaction variable. Thus, the interaction variable is labeled Consistency, since higher values indicate that the individual holds either more consistently liberal or more consistently conservative positions on both dimensions. We expect that there will be a positive and statistically significant relationship between the interaction variable and political participation.

Individuals who are moderate on both dimensions have values in the middle of the scale for the interaction variable described earlier. However, we also want to examine whether moderate voters are less likely to participate than cross-pressured, heterodox citizens. To determine

whether individuals who are policy moderates are more or less likely to participate and vote, we include the square of the consistency variable in the regression models. If the squared term is positive and statistically significant, this demonstrates that moderate voters are the least likely to participate.

Control Variables

In addition to the issue variables, we include a set of standard attitudinal and demographic variables that have been utilized in previous studies of political participation. The attitudinal variables include three measures of political partisanship. There are two dummy variables for being a Democratic identifier and a Republican identifier (these include independent partisan leaners), where the omitted category is independent and third-party identifiers. We also include the Strength of partisan identification, which was created by folding the seven-point partisan identification scale at the midpoint. Thus, the scale ranges between 0 and 3, with higher numbers indicating a stronger identification. We expect that participation will be higher for partisan identifiers and will increase as the strength of identification increases.[30]

In addition to partisanship, we also include measures that tap individuals' perceptions of their personal financial situation. Retrospective is a scale indicating how an individual's personal financial situation has changed over the previous year, and Prospective is a scale measuring a respondent's personal financial expectations for the next year. Both of these variables are three-point scales ranging from worse (1) to better (3). It is possible that citizens' perceptions of their financial situation will influence their turnout and campaign participation. Trust in government is a summated rating scale created from four variables, and the variable has been rescaled to range between 0 and 1. We expect that increasing trust will be associated with higher levels of political participation.

The demographic control variables are Education (a seven-category variable), Income (by quintiles), and Age (in years). We include the square of the age variable as well because we expect that participation will initially increase as individuals become older but eventually the likelihood of participating may decrease (or at least, the marginal rate of participating will decrease with age). We also include dummy variables for living in the South and being Female, African American, or a member of another Minority group. Finally, for the analysis of turnout, we include an additional variable. Recent is a dummy variable indicating whether an individual has changed residences within the last four years. Individuals who

have moved recently will be less likely to have registered and therefore will be less likely to be able to vote.

Multivariate Analysis of Campaign Participation

The regression analyses for campaign participation and turnout for each presidential election between 1972 and 2004 are reported in tables 14-1 and 14-2, respectively. First, consider the results for campaign participation reported in table 14-1. Not surprisingly, age, education, income, and strength of partisanship have statistically significant effects on participation across the various years. This means that individuals who have higher levels of education, are older and wealthier, and strongly identify with a political party are more likely to participate in campaigns.

For the issue variables and the interaction variables, there is significant variation across the years. For the first three elections analyzed, 1972–1980, the only coefficient that is statistically significant is for the Cultural dimension, which indicates that cultural liberals are more likely to participate, since the coefficient is negative. The other significant coefficient is the Consistency variable, which is significant in 1984 and between 1992 and 2004. Thus, there seems to be a significant change that occurred between the mid-1980s and the early 1990s, as the electorate responded to the growing polarization between party elites. Since 1992, ideologically consistent liberals and conservatives have been the most likely participants in campaign-related activities. Finally, the Consistency-squared variable is not statistically significant in any of the regressions in table 14-1; this indicates that moderates are *not* the least likely to participate, as some might suspect.

While examining the coefficients is informative, the best way to visualize the relationship between issues and political participation is to calculate predicted rates of participation for different combination of values for the Social Welfare and Cultural variables. Figure 14-1 shows the predicted rate of participation for five hypothetical citizens. A conservative (liberal) is defined as being one standard deviation above (below) the mean on both policy dimensions. A libertarian (populist) is one standard deviation above (below) the mean on the Social Welfare dimension and one standard deviation below (above) the mean on the Cultural dimension. A moderate has views that are at the mean on both policy dimensions. All of the other variables are held to their mean when calculating the predicted values.

Examining the predicted rates in figure 14-1 graphed between 1972 and 2004, we see that that there has been a change in the relative positions

Table 14-1. Negative Binomial Regression of Campaign Participation, 1972–2004

	1972 Coefficient		t	1976 Coefficient		t	1980 Coefficient		t	1984 Coefficient		t	1988 Coefficient		t
Social Welfare	–0.01		–0.34	–0.06		–1.26	0.05		1.02	0.08		1.95	–0.05		–1.09
Cultural	–0.17	**	–4.01	–0.07	*	–1.68	–0.09	*	–1.75	–0.14	**	–3.68	0.01		0.33
Consistency	0.04		0.81	0.02		0.39	0.05		0.81	0.10	**	2.62	0.04		1.01
Consistency^2	0.01		0.70	0.00		–0.29	0.02		1.12	0.01		0.91	0.01		0.61
Education	0.14	**	6.68	0.19	**	9.21	0.12	**	4.42	0.17	**	7.00	0.21	**	8.07
Age	0.00	*	–1.87	0.00		1.41	0.00		–1.04	0.00		0.57	0.01	**	2.35
Female	–0.08		–1.25	–0.18	**	–2.97	–0.07		–0.93	–0.18	**	–2.71	–0.19	**	–2.51
African American	0.07		0.60	–0.16		–1.18	–0.26		–1.67	0.11		0.92	0.19		1.34
Minority	0.02		0.13	0.21		1.61	–0.12		–0.65	–0.33	**	–2.36	0.29	**	2.25
South	0.03		0.48	–0.09		–1.32	–0.04		–0.46	0.02		0.32	–0.08		–1.01
Income	0.21	**	6.62	0.17	**	5.19	0.11	**	2.82	0.04		1.08	0.21	**	4.64
Retrospective	0.00		0.03	–0.09	**	–2.37	–0.01		–0.31	0.02		0.53	–0.05		–1.08
Prospective	–0.01		–0.21	0.08		1.51	0.02		0.43	0.04		0.72	0.12	*	1.75
Trust	0.06		0.48	–0.14		–1.02	0.03		0.16	–0.40	**	–2.64	–0.21		–1.20
Strength	0.22	**	5.03	0.30	**	7.40	0.31	**	5.97	0.32	**	7.30	0.20	**	4.19
Democrat	0.11		0.82	–0.17		–1.39	–0.10		–0.58	–0.03		–0.18	0.27		1.44
Republican	0.19		1.40	–0.16		–1.29	0.26		1.57	–0.10		–0.65	0.32	*	1.69
Constant	–1.94	**	–7.36	–1.95	**	–8.60	–1.87	**	–7.07	–1.93	**	–7.24	–3.07	**	–9.68
N	2183			1893			1398			1929			1765		
ln (alpha)	–0.74	**	–5.21	–1.91	**	–5.84	–1.5	**	–4.84	–1.14	**	–5.56	–0.70	**	–4.04

*$p < 0.1$; **$p < 0.05$.

	1992 Coefficient		t	1996 Coefficient		t	2000 Coefficient		t	2004 Coefficient		t
Social Welfare	0.06		1.56	0.05		0.89	0.02		0.39	0.08	**	1.88
Cultural	–0.04		–1.23	–0.03		–0.55	–0.02		–0.46	–0.09	*	–1.94
Consistency	0.15	**	3.59	0.21	**	3.01	0.14	**	2.32	0.13	**	2.82
Consistency^2	0.00		–0.02	0.00		–0.24	0.00		–0.23	0.00		–0.04
Education	0.13	**	6.49	0.13	**	4.46	0.09	**	3.33	0.06	**	2.53
Age	0.00		–1.51	0.01	**	3.43	0.01	**	2.25	0.00		–0.74
Female	–0.19	**	–3.13	–0.20	**	–2.46	–0.18	**	–2.28	–0.10		–1.47
African American	–0.17		–1.61	–0.08		–0.51	0.08		0.53	–0.13		–1.10
Minority	–0.08		–0.80	–0.05		–0.34	0.10		0.81	–0.02		–0.16
South	0.09		1.41	–0.01		–0.07	0.06		0.72	–0.04		–0.50
Income	0.08	**	2.52	0.12	**	2.61	0.13	**	3.29	0.03		0.83
Retrospective	–0.02		–0.64	0.02		0.36	0.05		0.73	0.00		–0.11
Prospective	0.01		0.18	0.09		1.16	–0.06		–0.81	–0.01		–0.36
Trust	–0.29	*	–1.95	0.17		0.88	0.15		0.84	–0.13		–0.79
Strength	0.17	**	4.60	0.27	**	5.15	0.19	**	3.88	0.30	**	6.91
Democrat	0.11		0.88	–0.34	*	–1.69	0.10		0.52	0.05		0.33
Republican	0.03		0.26	–0.12		–0.59	0.19		0.95	–0.07		–0.43
Constant	–1.38	**	–6.12	–2.61	**	–7.56	–2.07	**	–6.29	–0.88	**	–3.86
N	2246			1532			1256			1066		
ln (alpha)	–1.25	**	–6.58	–0.77	**	–4.03	–1.29	**	–4.76	–3.98		–1.61

*$p < 0.1$; **$p < 0.05$.

Table 14-2. Probit Regression of Turnout, 1972–2004

	1972 Coefficient		t	1976 Coefficient		t	1980 Coefficient		t	1984 Coefficient		t	1988 Coefficient		t
Social Welfare	–0.04		–0.69	0.02		0.48	0.03		0.50	0.15	**	3.52	0.08		1.59
Cultural	–0.03		–0.64	0.04		0.95	0.02		0.45	–0.01		–0.33	0.00		–0.01
Consistency	0.05		0.85	0.11	**	2.00	0.02		0.34	0.04		1.18	0.05		1.21
Consistency^2	–0.01		–0.71	–0.02		–0.94	0.01		0.55	0.03		1.50	0.05	**	2.72
Education	0.20	**	7.19	0.22	**	8.72	0.25	**	8.63	0.22	**	8.98	0.25	**	9.85
Age	0.01	**	4.19	0.02	**	7.61	0.02	**	7.82	0.02	**	8.63	0.02	**	8.94
Female	–0.21	**	–2.68	–0.25	**	–3.62	–0.05		–0.60	0.12	*	1.82	0.04		0.58
African American	0.12		0.79	0.20		1.39	0.05		0.37	0.17		1.46	0.13		1.03
Minority	–0.14		–0.66	–0.24		–1.63	–0.61	**	–3.53	–0.14		–1.21	0.16		1.34
South	–0.32	**	–3.78	–0.26	**	–3.55	–0.04		–0.52	–0.12		–1.58	–0.44	**	–5.74
Income	0.16	**	4.19	0.22	**	5.96	0.16	**	3.68	0.19	**	5.43	0.25	**	6.42
Retrospective	–0.02		–0.27	–0.02		–0.54	0.04		0.81	–0.02		–0.41	–0.04		–0.89
Prospective	–0.01		–0.11	0.04		0.75	–0.12	**	–2.02	0.01		0.21	0.02		0.33
Trust	0.21		1.30	0.04		0.25	0.21		1.02	0.03		0.17	0.37	**	2.27
Strength	0.16	**	2.80	0.17	**	3.33	0.14	**	2.48	0.16	**	3.64	0.27	**	5.58
Democrat	0.33	**	2.28	0.25	**	1.99	0.27	*	1.83	0.16		1.25	0.05		0.38
Republican	0.37	**	2.47	0.26	**	2.02	0.34	**	2.26	0.15		1.21	0.09		0.65
Constant	–0.89	**	–2.94	–1.81	**	–7.41	–1.96	**	–6.99	–2.03	**	–7.82	–2.56	**	–9.08
N	1960			1909			1407			1989			1773		

*$p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$.

	1992 Coefficient		t	1996 Coefficient		t	2000 Coefficient		t	2004 Coefficient		t
Social Welfare	0.10	**	2.14	0.16	**	2.84	0.13	**	2.37	0.18	**	2.79
Cultural	–0.05		–1.13	–0.04		–0.82	–0.10	*	–1.92	–0.08		–1.19
Consistency	0.01		0.12	0.15	**	2.08	0.08		1.34	0.07		1.10
Consistency^2	0.05	**	2.24	0.00		–0.10	0.02		0.74	–0.01		–0.41
Education	0.26	**	10.75	0.21	**	7.27	0.23	**	7.05	0.21	**	5.68
Age	0.02	**	8.03	0.02	**	7.65	0.02	**	5.99	0.01	**	3.10
Female	0.05		0.71	0.03		0.33	–0.08		–0.83	0.11		1.08
African American	0.03		0.32	0.13		0.97	0.34	**	2.07	0.33	**	2.22
Minority	–0.33	**	–3.19	–0.05		–0.44	–0.09		–0.69	–0.23	*	–1.69
South	–0.28	**	–3.97	–0.13		–1.47	–0.11		–1.22	–0.38	**	–3.65
Income	0.20	**	5.74	0.19	**	4.23	0.14	**	3.20	0.10	**	2.28
Retrospective	–0.07	*	–1.68	0.03		0.61	0.15	**	2.08	0.07		1.62
Prospective	0.08		1.35	0.02		0.24	–0.03		–0.42	0.01		0.20
Trust	0.01		0.09	0.14		0.73	0.30		1.55	–0.09		–0.38
Strength	0.19	**	4.50	0.30	**	5.21	0.24	**	3.99	0.30	**	4.58
Democrat	0.24	**	2.01	0.08		0.50	0.17		0.95	0.16		0.88
Republican	0.06		0.49	0.15		0.92	0.16		0.90	0.30		1.62
Constant	–2.02	**	–8.15	–2.39	**	–7.59	–2.28	**	–6.75	–1.55	**	–5.20
N	2254			1533			1249			1066		

*$p < 0.1$; **$p < 0.05$.

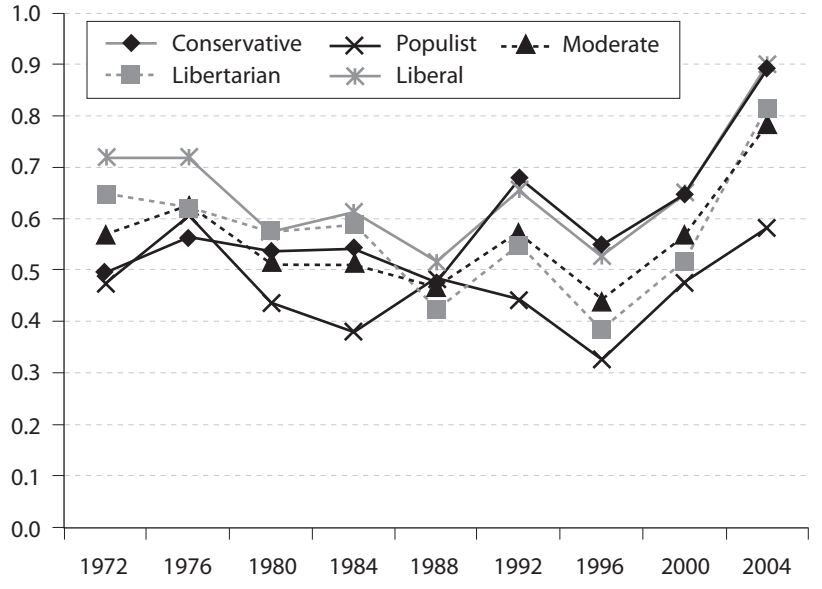

Figure 14-1
Campaign participation by ideological type, 1972–2004.

of the various types of citizens. Between 1972 and 1980, the most politically active citizens were the *cultural* liberals, i.e., liberals and libertarians. The clear pattern that emerges after 1988 is that the highest participation rate is among liberals and conservatives. The lowest participation rate is among populists. Participation rates of libertarians and moderates are located between populists and the ideologically consistent citizens. Thus, over the period analyzed here, the most notable change is that conservatives have become more involved in the political process. However, populists have remained the least participatory throughout.

Multivariate Analysis of Voter Turnout

The preceding analysis focused on forms of political participation besides voting. Given that the election results ultimately depend on who casts a vote on Election Day, it is important to analyze turnout separate from other forms of political participation. Further, voting may be subject to different psychological and sociological influences and may present a unique set of costs and benefits. Therefore, we chose to examine the link between ideological consistency and turnout separately.

Table 14-1 shows the regression model of turnout for each year. We employ the same set of independent variables used in the analysis of campaign participation. Since the dependent variable is a dichotomous variable (either someone voted or he or she did not), the regression coefficients were calculated via a probit model. Further, we calculated the predicted probability of turnout for the same five ideological types we used in calculating the participation rates in figure 14-1. The predicted probabilities of voting for the five ideological types are displayed in figure 14-2.

First, looking at the regression models reported in table 14-2, the only discernible pattern is that the Social Welfare dimension is positive and statistically significant between 1992 and 2004. This suggests that the highest participation rate is among those voters who are conservative on the Social Welfare dimension—i.e., those we label as the conservatives and libertarians. This is visible if we look at figure 14-2, which shows

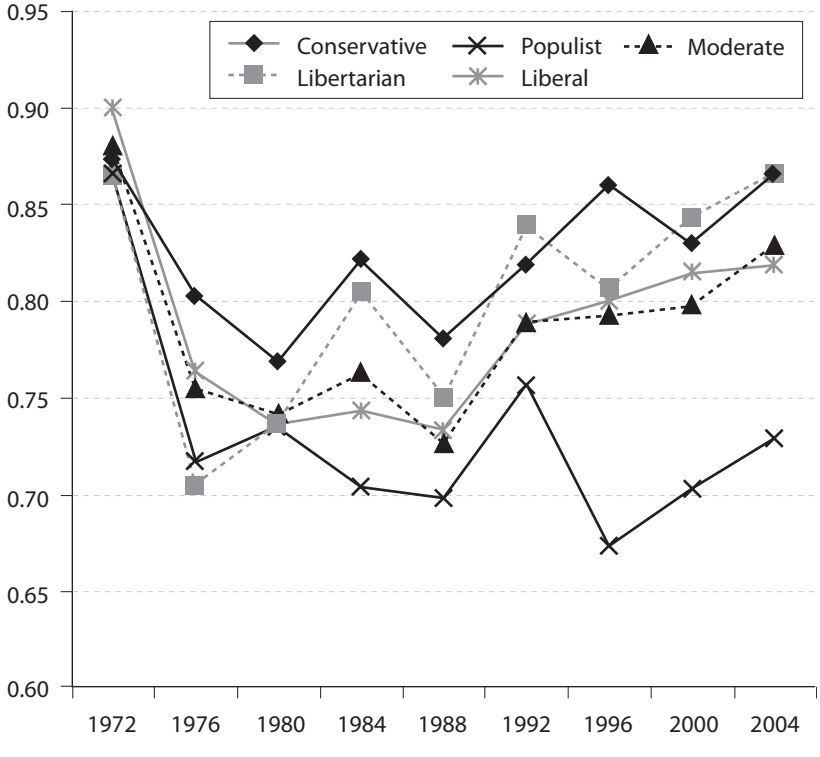

Figure 14-2
Turnout by ideological type, 1972–2004.

that the highest probability of voting belongs to the libertarians and conservatives from 1984–2004. The probability of voting for the liberals and moderates track closely together over this time period as well, although the probability of voting for these individuals is several percentage points lower than probabilities for the social-welfare conservatives. Citizens' ideological consistency across economic and cultural issue dimensions did not lead to higher rates of turnout.

The most striking difference illustrated in figure 14-2 concerns the populists. Across the time period analyzed, they have the lowest probability of voting. Further, the difference between the populists and the others appears to have grown after 1992. Between 1996 and 2004, the probability that populists would vote is approximately 10 to 15 percentage points lower than the probabilities for the other ideological types. Alternatively, consider that the probability of voting has increased for every group since 1976 except for the populists. The probability of populist voting is approximately the same in 1976 and 2004.

Endogeneity, Ideological Consistency, and Participation

One possible critique of the argument we have made here is that we have the causal mechanism backward—that is, it is entirely possible that we have the story wrong. We have argued that individuals' level of political participation responds to the package of issues presented by party elites. However, an alternative explanation for the findings is that individuals who are engaged and active in politics actually adjust their issue positions to match the party elites they support. The two mechanisms are well described by Abramowitz and Saunders:

> Increased emphasis on ideological appeals by party leaders can influence the beliefs of active partisans through two different processes: persuasion and selective recruitment/derecruitment. In the case of persuasion, individuals who are already politically active may adjust their issue positions to bring them into line with the new positions of their party's leaders. In the case of selective recruitment/derecruitment, previously inactive voters may decide to become politically active because they agree with the new positions taken by their party's leaders, whereas previously active individuals who do not agree with these issue positions may dropout of the ranks of active partisans.[31]

Abramowitz and Saunders suggest that both selective recruitment and persuasion are at play. This perspective seems consistent with Layman and Carsey's conflict extension hypothesis.[32] We also believe that it is possible that some individuals may shift their positions on issues to match party elites. However, we also want to claim that the consistency of indi-

viduals' issues positions is the dominant influence on their proclivity to participate.

If individuals are being persuaded to participate, we would expect that the relationship between ideological consistency and participation would disappear among those with high political knowledge, since these individuals will bring their issue positions in line with their partisanship. Those citizens with low political knowledge, who are also unlikely to participate in campaigns, may be unaware of the differences between the parties and thus may not adjust their issue positions. However, when we replicate the analysis presented in table 14-1 but stratify the analysis by high and low knowledge individuals, we find that the link between consistency and campaign participation is maintained, particularly among the high knowledge group. Specifically, we ran the campaign participation regression for a high and low knowledge group by splitting the sample at the mean value of knowledge.[33]

The results produced by stratifying by political knowledge confirm our expectations and add some additional insights. First, as we would expect, the average participation rates of high knowledge individuals are higher than participation rates of low knowledge individuals regardless of ideological type. More importantly from our perspective, the pattern of participation among high knowledge citizens is as we would predict. We find that by 1992, conservatives and liberals are the most likely to participate, whereas libertarians and populists have the lowest participation rates. However, when we examine participation among low knowledge individuals, we find that the pattern reflects our expectations but not until 2000. In 2000 and 2004, the pattern of participation among the ideological types is the same as for the high knowledge individuals, where liberals and conservatives are the most likely to participate. Thus, low knowledge individuals also seem to be responding to the polarization in the party system but at a slower rate than high knowledge individuals. We interpret this to mean that it takes low knowledge individuals longer to become aware of and then react to changes in the partisan divide. Overall, these results stratified by political knowledge provide strong evidence that individuals are responding to the polarization of party elites based on the ideological consistency of their issues attitudes.[34]

To further boost support for the claim that activists are being recruited to participate, we used the ANES 1992–1996 panel to examine whether previous expressions of issue attitudes can predict participation two and four years later. Panel data allows us to examine how ideological consistency affects *the same voters* over three different election periods. Thus, using the same variables and methods we used in table 14-1, we analyzed participation rates in 1994 and 1996 using individuals' issues scores in 1992 and 1994, respectively. Second, we examined participation rates in

1996 as a function of issues positions in 1992. Our expectation is that if individuals are aligning their issue positions to match party elites, then the consistency of their positions on the two issue dimensions either two or four years earlier should not be a significant predictor of participation. For in this case, elite persuasion accounts for any observed connection between citizens' issue preferences and their rate of participation. However, if individuals are responding to the package of policies presented by party elites, then the consistency of voters' previous issue preferences should have a significant effect on their current level of participation, because in this case citizens are drawn into the electoral process precisely because their issue preferences match those of party elites.

The first analysis reported in table 14-3 uses lagged values of Social Welfare, Cultural, Consistency, and Consistency-squared, which were created by using the survey data from the prior election two years earlier. Technical readers will want to know that we also used lagged values of partisan identification and strength of partisanship, as individuals' partisanship may respond to elite party polarization over this time period as well. The second analysis uses lagged values two elections prior to predict participation. The key finding is that in both regressions, the consistency variable is statistically significant and in the expected direction. Further, the magnitude of the coefficients for the consistency variable is approximately the same regardless of whether the lag is one election or two elections. The coefficients for the consistency variable are also on par with the coefficients reported in table 14-1. Thus, these results further support our claim that individuals are being mobilized, or demobilized, to participate in campaign-related activities depending on the extent to which their issue positions match those of party elites.

Conclusion

Over the past several decades, political party elites have become increasingly polarized on both social and economic issues. The Republican Party is now home to economic and social conservatives, while social and economic liberals have migrated to the Democratic Party. The analyses here suggest that citizens who have issue preferences that match those of party elites—consistently liberal or consistently conservative—are more likely to play active roles in political campaigns than citizens with heterodox or even moderate issue preferences. Even so, the differences in participation levels between these ideologically consistent voters and libertarians—and in some cases, moderates—are not as great as they would be were the analyses to wholly confirm the grim picture painted by Fiorina's discus-

Table 14-3. Negative Binomial Regression of Campaign Participation, 1992–1996 Panel

	Lagged 1 Election			Lagged 2 Elections		
	Coefficient		t value	Coefficient		t value
Lagged Social Welfare	0.14	**	2.38	0.09		1.07
Lagged Cultural	0.00		0.00	0.19	**	2.40
Lagged Consistency	0.12	**	2.49	0.13	*	1.66
Lagged Consistency^2	0.04	**	2.57	0.04		1.60
Education	0.14	**	4.01	0.08	*	1.66
Age	0.01	**	2.22	0.01	**	2.08
Female	–0.06		–0.59	–0.07		–0.49
African American	0.25		1.48	0.18		0.71
Minority	–0.11		–0.53	–0.07		–0.27
South	0.10		1.06	0.05		0.34
Income	0.22	**	4.35	0.29	**	3.80
Retrospective	–0.03		–0.49	–0.04		–0.38
Prospective	–0.06		–0.75	–0.16		–1.24
Trust	0.00		0.33	0.00		0.52
Lagged Strength	0.15	**	2.44	–0.07		–0.74
Lagged Democrat	0.13		0.56	0.79	**	2.32
Lagged Republican	0.06		0.24	0.82	**	2.38
1994	–0.10		–1.05			
Constant	–2.60	**	–7.25	–2.76	**	–5.37
N	1155			487		
ln (alpha)	–0.57	**	–2.94	–0.81	**	–2.46

*$p < 0.1$; **$p < 0.05$.

sion of the "dark side of civic engagement."[35] While ideological consistency does influence political participation, many "heterodox," or ideologically inconsistent, voters, more often than not libertarians, do not sit on the sidelines come election season.

Moreover, our results indicate that ideological consistency plays a statistically insignificant role when it comes to voting turnout, which suggests that ideological consistency has more relevance to the demanding, intense, high stakes arena represented by election campaigns than it does to the more causal and less costly act of voting.

One explanation for our findings is consistent with Miller and Schofield's account of realignment.[36] Libertarians, who are conservative on economic issues and liberal on social issues, seem to have been activated during the time that Miller and Schofield argue that social issues became the "active" dimension of elite contestation. Clearly, more work needs to be done to understand how this activation occurs, as in Miller and Schofield's account, only one issue dimension is active, while our analysis allows both dimensions to matter.[37]

Further, our argument and findings are consistent with Trier and Hillygus's demonstration[38] that a failure to treat individual preferences as multidimensional results in the mislabeling of heterodox voters as pure moderates, leading to biased voting predictions. In other words, it is a mistake to assume that there are liberal voters, conservative voters, and nothing else. Those with moderate, libertarian, or populist views are fundamentally less likely to participate in campaign activities than ideologically consistent liberals and conservatives. Considering our results concomitantly with Trier and Hillygus's findings along with Miller and Schofield's perspective on realignment, it is clear that treating all heterodox voters as moderates is a mistake; indeed, future work must measure citizens' issue preferences on both social and economic issues.

Finally, one take-away point from our turnout model is the distinct differences between populists and all other voters. We are hard-pressed to name a major party candidate for president who has campaigned with a purely populist rhetorical style. While failed candidacies like that of John Edwards's 2008 presidential campaign evoked the term "populism," these quixotic White House sojourns were populist on the economic issue dimension, but clearly libertarian on the social issue dimension. That is, "populist" candidates like Edwards still provided consistently liberal ideological cues to the public.

In sum, elite party polarization clearly provides cues to ideologically consistent voters that encourages them to participate in election campaigns,[39] while the highlighting of particular issue dimensions by elites in a given election cycle can systematically activate cross-pressured voters. Thus, citizens' preferences on social and economic issues, either separately or in combination, seem to lie at the very heart of democratic political participation.

Appendix: Measurement

To test our argument, we created measures of citizens' policy preferences on social-welfare issues and cultural issues for the ANES presidential surveys from 1972 to 2004. The ANES surveys have numerous issue ques-

tions; however, there is a significant amount of missing data when all issue questions are used simultaneously (although most individual questions have only about 10 percent of cases without a valid response). To deal with the missing data, we employ a multiple imputation technique as suggested by Schafer and Graham.[40] Specifically, we used a Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) procedure with an uninformative Jeffery's prior in SAS 9.1, where starting values were generated from an expected maximization (EM) algorithm. As in King et al.,[41] this procedure assumes that data are from a multivariate normal distribution but uses a different estimation routine than they employ.

After constructing the five imputed data sets, we performed a confirmatory factor analysis for each data set. The factor analysis specified two separate yet correlated dimensions using the survey questions for each dimension separately. Since the indicator variables are ordinal, we use weighted least-squares to estimate the parameters.[42] Based on the factor analytic results, we generated scores for both issue dimensions, and the scores were rescaled to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1, with larger values representing a more conservative orientation.

The coefficient estimates and the respective standard errors for the regression analyses reported in this chapter combine the results from the five imputed data sets. Table 14-4 presents the specific questions that were used in each year to construct the Social Welfare and the Cultural scores. It is worth noting that the correlation between these two dimensions is quite low, considering the procedure controls for measurement error. In 1996, the correlation between the two dimensions is 0.55, which was the highest correlation for any of the eight ANES surveys we used. The lowest correlation was 0.06 in 1988. The weak correlation between citizens' preferences on these two issue dimensions indicates that there are significant numbers of populist and libertarians in the electorate and that ideological conflict cannot be represented by a single measure like liberal-conservative self-identification.

Table 14-4. Items Used to Create Social Welfare and Cultural Scores

Social Welfare	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004
7-point government health insurance scale	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
7-point government guaranteed jobs scale	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Does civil rights push too fast?	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Government ensure school integration	X	X				X		X	
7-point busing scale	X	X	X	X					
7-point aid to blacks scale	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Government ensure fair treatment in bobs	X				X	X	X	X	
Change in tax rates	X	X							
Does R favor segregation?		X							
Government services			X						
7-point government services/spending scale				X	X	X	X	X	X
Food stamps—federal spending				X	X	X	X	X	
Social Security—federal spending				X	X	X	X	X	X
Assistance to African Americans—federal spending				X	X	X		X	
Government spending for Medicare				X					
Government spending for the unemployed				X	X	X			
Homeless—federal spending					X	X	X		
Racial preferences in hiring					X				
Racial quotas in college admissions					X	X			

Welfare programs—federal spending						X	X	X	X
Poor—federal spending						X	X	X	X
Affirmative action for hiring/promotion						X	X	X	
Support for affirmative action programs							X	X	
Child care—federal spending							X	X	X
Cultural									
7-point women's equal role scale	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
When should abortion be allowed?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Legalize marijuana	X	X							
R favor/oppose equal rights amendment		X	X						
Should prayer be allowed in schools?			X	X	X	X	X		
Protect homosexuals from discrimination					X	X	X	X	X
Gays be allowed to serve in the military						X	X	X	X
Gays/lesbians be allowed to adopt						X		X	X
Parental consent for abortion						X		X	
Government funding for abortions						X			X
Husband's consent for abortion						X			
Partial-birth abortion								X	X
Same-sex couples be allowed to marry									X

Notes

1. Poole and Rosenthal (1997); Jacobson (2000); Layman and Carsey (2002).
2. Carmines and Ensley (2009).
3. Fiorina, Pope, and Abrams (2005).
4. Hetherington (2001); Fiorina, Pope, and Abrams (2005); Abramowitz (2006); Jacobson (2006a); Abramowitz and Saunders (2008); Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope (2008); Claassen and Highton (2009).
5. Verba and Nie (1972), p. 1.
6. McClurg (2006); Mutz (2002); Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996); Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995).
7. Fiorina (1999a).
8. Abramowitz (2006).
9. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002).
10. Theiss-Morse and Hibbing (2005), p. 244.
11. Petrocik (1996).
12. However, in previous work, we have found that voters with consistent positions on both the economic and social issue dimensions are less likely to cast split tickets than moderates, populists, and libertarians (Carmines and Ensley 2009).
13. Poole and Rosenthal (1997).
14. Shafer and Claggett (1995); Layman and Carsey (2002); Carsey and Layman (2006).
15. Shafer and Claggett (1995).
16. Kellstedt (2003).
17. Miller and Schofield (2003).
18. Shafer and Claggett (1995), p. 24.
19. Ibid., p. 23.
20. Layman and Carsey (2002); Fiorina, Pope, and Abrams (2005); Carmines and Ensley (2009). Levendusky (2009) demonstrates that some Americans have engaged in (primarily) party-driven "sorting" over the past few decades. In his formulation, these are the citizens who are polarized.
21. Poole and Rosenthal (1997).
22. Hetherington (2001).
23. See also Levendusky (2009).
24. Carmines, Ensley, and Wagner (2005, 2006).
25. Fiorina, Pope, and Abrams (2005).
26. Ibid., p. 33.
27. Carmines, Ensley, and Wagner (2005); Carmines and Ensley (2009).
28. Fiorina (1999).
29. Miller and Schofield (2003).
30. We have discussed elsewhere (Carmines, Ensley, and Wagner 2005) how the consistency of the ideological dimensions weakens the strength of partisan identification among individuals. Therefore, by including the strength of identification as an explanatory factor, we may be downplaying the true effect of con-

sistency on participation. If we exclude strength of identification from the models estimated here, our basic findings remain unchanged. But as we would anticipate if the strength of identification is excluded from the analysis, the effect of consistency is slightly stronger when predicting campaign participation, but the effect of consistency remains insignificant in the analysis of turnout. However, since it is possible that the strength of partisanship could affect consistency as well, we opt to keep the strength variable in the analysis.

31. Saunders and Abramowitz (2004), p. 287.

32. Layman and Carsey (2002); Carsey and Layman (2006).

33. Knowledge is measured using factual questions available in each wave of the ANES, as recommended by Mondak (1999, 2001).

34. These findings suggestively recall the importance of previous work suggesting the key role that education plays in who votes (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980).

35. Fiorina (1999a).

36. Miller and Schofield (2003).

37. This is consistent with the "conflict-extension," rather than "conflict displacement," theory of partisan change in American politics (see Carsey and Layman 2006; Layman and Carsey 2002).

38. Treier and Hillygus (2009).

39. See Levendusky (2009).

40. Schafer and Graham (2002).

41. King et al. (2001).

42. Schumacker and Beyerlein (2000).