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Partisan Hearts and Minds

Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters

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Chapter 2 Partisan Groups as Objects of Identification

The term *identification* is commonly used in two ways. One use is synonymous with empathy, as when a person identifies with a sympathetic social group. The groups in question may be real or imaginary, contemporary or historical. When we read *The Peloponnesian Wars,* for example, we typically identify with the Athenians in the sense that we side emotionally with Athenian culture and institutions. Athenians are our kind of people; they are humane, articulate, and high-minded, if a bit fractious. Their Spartan adversaries are coarse and cruel. We identify with them only in those passages when their battlefield misfortunes elicit our sympathies.

Another usage of identification is synonymous with self-conception, as when a person labels himself or herself an ancient Athenian. Membership in the social group "ancient Athenian" is a necessary condition for identification of this sort. Pericles identified with ancient Athenians: He lived in ancient Athens and clearly regarded himself as an Athenian. Absent some sort of delusion, this form of identification is unavailable to modern people because we cannot *be* ancient Athenians.

As this example makes apparent, the two meanings of identification, affinity and self-categorization, need not be conterminous. A person may identify with a group but perceive no membership in it. Conversely, people may perceive themselves to be members of a group but feel no affinity for it or its members. Disaffected group members may recognize an identification *as* without feeling an identification *with.*

Although it is important to keep these two meanings of identification distinct for purposes of defining party identification, they will often overlap empirically. For one thing, members of social groups, particularly groups that the broader society accords great significance, tend to view the group and its members in a positive light. By and large, Jewish people display more positive feelings toward Jews as a group; attorneys give higher ratings to lawyers as a group; those who describe their class status as "lower" or "lower-working" class offer more favorable ratings of "poor people"; self-described gay men express much more positive evaluations of homosexuals than do the rest of the public. Although members of unpopular groups tend to harbor some of the same negative stereotypes about these groups as nonmembers, members' overall evaluations of these groups tend to be positive.

A second reason why affinity and self-categorization tend to go hand in hand is that the criteria by which one judges membership in a social group are often vague and indeterminate. No formal or widely shared standards exist for determining whether a person is a feminist, a baseball fan, a member of the underclass, or a patriot. Most Americans, for example, seem to think of themselves as environmentalists even though they do not belong to any formal environmental organization or, indeed, engage in any readily identifiable environment-friendly behavior (Guber 1998). Criteria for membership in the social category "environmentalist" are sufficiently porous to allow anyone who identifies with environmentalism (or its proponents) to identify as an environmentalist. One need only be an environmentalist at heart.

Murky standards of group membership are of special importance to the conception of party identification in most political systems. Although some parties have official membership lists (for example, the Chinese Communist Party and Britain's Conservative Party), American parties and many mass-based parties elsewhere have formal standards for membership that vary from meager to venal. Any citizen willing to part with a few dollars may visit the Web sites of the Republican or Democratic parties and become a member of one or both. Some U.S. states have party registration, but this, too, is membership of the most minimal kind. Party registration in a (diminishing) number of states is a pre-

requisite for voting in a party primary, but Democrats and Republicans who seek to vote against candidates they detest may freely switch their registration. Indeed, anyone willing to put up with the annoyance of filling out forms is entitled to change party registration without fear of being purged for disloyalty. Party membership may have some formally defined meaning, but this meaning is much more diffuse than for other organizations, such as the Rotary Club or the American Civil Liberties Union.

The diffuse nature of mass-based parties creates a puzzle: If *identification as* presupposes some form of membership, to what do partisan identifiers belong? The ingenious answer supplied by Angus Campbell et al. in *The American Voter* (1960) is that voters frequently (but by no means invariably or to any great degree) see themselves as belonging to partisan groups, Democrats or Republicans. The group in effect is suspended by the psychological image it conjures. It exists as a stereotype in the minds of voters, who in turn harbor a sense of attachment toward this group image. Democrats, for example, are people who think of themselves as Democrats.

This solves the puzzle of how a public that is traditionally skeptical of parties, has little information about their activities, and virtually no contact with them as organizations could identify themselves as partisans. The conceptual focus is not on identification with the parties per se but with Democrats and Republicans as social groups. Valid measures of party identification must focus attention on these social groups and invite respondents to define themselves using these group nouns. Scholars have sometimes lost sight of this definition when studying party identification. Merely asking respondents whether they like a political party, support it, vote for it, feel close to it, believe it to be effective in office, or find its ideas attractive is not the same as asking about self-definition and group attachment. As James Campbell et al. (1986) point out, these distinctions are central to the conception of party identification laid out in *The American Voter:*

> Partisanship was conceptualized as a psychological identification with a party. . . . As thus conceived, partisans are partisan because they think they are partisan. They are not necessarily partisan because they vote like a partisan, or think like a partisan, or register as a partisan, or because someone else thinks they are a partisan. In a strict sense, they are not even partisan because they like one party more than another. Partisanship as party identification is entirely a matter of self-definition.

In the same vein, we would argue that to appreciate the special properties of party identification, it is essential to maintain a clear distinction between it and other sorts of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. To make this case, we must address two related questions: What *isn't* party identification? How do we know that party identification is genuine?

To be sure, party identification tends to be correlated with a variety of political attitudes, particularly those directly related to parties. People who think of themselves as Democrats tend to like the Democratic Party (and not the Republican Party). Consider, for example, how self-described Democrats, Independents, and Republicans rated their feelings of "warmth" about the parties on scales ranging from zero ("cold") to 100 ("very warm") in the 1996 NES. Democrats on average assigned the Democratic Party a score of 77, compared with 41 for the Republican Party. A similar gap in evaluations was evident among Republicans, who on average rated the Democratic Party a 37 and the Republican Party a 73. Independents fell in the middle, assigning average evaluations of 53 and 54 to the Democratic and Republican parties, respectively. The correlation between partisan identification and partisan opinions remains high as we move from rather diffuse feelings of "warmth" toward more focused assessments about which party can better handle foreign affairs or manage the nation's economy. Only 2% of the Republicans polled believed that the Democratic Party does a better job of handling the economy; 71% believed the Republican Party to be superior. Among Democrats, 56% gave the Democratic Party the edge, and only 7% endorsed the Republican Party's economic stewardship. As usual, Independents fell in between, with 21% preferring the Democratic Party and 27% the Republican.

Finally, partisanship is correlated with opinions on questions of public policy. On most political issues, Democrats stand to the left of Independents, who in turn stand to the left of Republicans. One must be cautious when interpreting this correlation, however. As Gregory Markus (1982) has noted, the direction of causality flows in two directions. On the one hand, citizens occasionally drift toward parties that take ideologically appealing stances on the issues of the day. On the other hand, parties also instruct partisan supporters on how right-thinking Democrats or Republicans view these issues. Classic examples of this phenomenon are Richard Nixon's decision to open diplomatic relations with China in 1972, which produced a dramatic transformation of Republicans' views about how the United States should deal with this Communist regime. Another is Ronald Reagan's proposal to cut taxes during the 1980 campaign. Reagan contended that his tax cut would stimulate the economy to such an extent that the government would experience no loss of tax revenue. This idea went from a relatively controversial campaign plank (derided as "voodoo eco-

nomics" by Reagan's primary opponent, George Bush) to the centerpiece of the Republican legislative agenda in 1981 and a key article of faith among Republicans in the turbulent years that followed.

Another point to bear in mind is the fact that the correlation between party identification and stances on issues is often weak. Consider, for example, the relationship between partisanship and views on the question of whether civil rights leaders are "pushing too fast," an NES question that dates back to 1964. This item has attracted special attention because it is often argued that racial issues have played a central role in disrupting the Democratic coalition forged during the New Deal. Carmines and Stimson (1989) contend that racially conservative white Democrats became alienated by policies such as affirmative action and school desegregation, which increasingly became identified with the Democratic platform. Although the civil rights question typically ranks among the most reliable measures of racial attitudes in the NES, Table 2.1 shows that it tends to be weakly correlated with party identification. In any given year, a greater fraction of Republicans than Democrats expressed the view that civil rights leaders are "pushing too fast," but the gap between them is not large, often just a few percentage points. Although racial issues have profoundly altered party coalitions at the congressional level (Carmines and Stimson 1989), it is by no means clear that the same has been true of the mass public (Abramowitz 1994).

A stronger correlation emerges when we shift attention to questions concerning the scope of the welfare state. The NES has traditionally asked respondents whether "the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living" or instead whether government "should just let each person get ahead on his own." As shown in Table 2.2, the gap between Democrats and Republicans has been fairly marked since 1972 when the question was first asked in its current format. In 1996, one-third of all Democrats supported job guarantees, compared with one in ten Republicans. Orientations toward the welfare state do not coincide exactly with party affiliation, but the two are certainly related.

Stronger still is the relationship between party identification and ideological self-categorization (Table 2.3). Ideological self-categorization differs in subtle but important ways from ideology itself. It taps not what the respondent thinks about various issues but rather the ideological label he or she finds most suitable. In that sense, it bears a certain similarity to party identification: One need not be a card-carrying conservative to call oneself a conservative. It is hard to tell from available data whether survey respondents are primarily describing

Table 2.1. Partisan Identification and Opinions about Civil Rights

	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
1964	62	62	71
1966	63	63	71
1968	57	70	65
1970	44	48	56
1972	44	44	52
1974	39	43	43
1976	38	40	41
1980	29	34	41
1984	23	31	38
1986	23	22	28
1988	20	25	31
1990	24	29	30
1992	29	25	31

Source: American National Election Studies, 1964–92.
Note: Entries are the percentage of each partisan group saying that civil rights leaders are pushing too fast. Note that the civil rights question does not appear in certain NES surveys. The question reads: "Some say that the civil rights people have been trying to push too fast. Others feel that they haven't pushed fast enough. How about you: Do you think that civil rights leaders are trying to push too fast, are going too slowly, or are they moving about the right speed?"

their intellectual orientation or their opinions of the social groups known as liberals and conservatives. As Converse (1964) points out, many survey respondents have difficulty supplying adequate definitions of liberalism and conservatism, and ideological self-categorization is only moderately correlated with stances on issues such as the death penalty, abortion, and defense spending.[1]

We will revisit the nexus between issues and partisanship in Chapter 3. For now, our point is that although party attachments tend to coincide with partisan evaluations and other political orientations, identification with political parties is both conceptually distinct and empirically quite different in character. The statistical association between partisanship and issue stance, although often strong, is far from exact; partisans need not and do not invariably agree with the leaders of their party. This point takes on special importance with re-

Table 2.2. Partisan Identification and Opinions about the Scope of Government

	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
1972	43	27	17
1974	31	23	14
1976	33	20	13
1978	23	17	7
1980	37	22	12
1982	32	24	14
1984	35	31	18
1986	33	22	14
1988	34	23	14
1990	38	30	19
1992	37	25	14
1994	37	27	16
1996	34	23	10

Source: American National Election Studies, 1972–96.
Note: Entries are the percentage of each partisan group saying that government should guarantee jobs. The question reads: "Some people feel that the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Others think the government should just let each person get ahead on his own. And, of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?" Entries are the percentage of respondents placing themselves at points one through three on the seven-point scale.

gard to voting preferences. Nothing in the definition of party identification precludes Democrats from voting for Republican candidates. (Whether doing so in fact erodes the Democrats' sense of identification is a separate question, to which we will return.) Partisan identification is not the sole factor governing how voters evaluate candidates. Democrats would have liked the avuncular war hero Dwight D. Eisenhower better if in 1952 he had turned out to be a Democrat, but they still held him in high esteem, and it was Eisenhower's stature and popularity that enabled him to defeat Adlai Stevenson. Many scholars have assumed that partisans "defect" from their party on account of their weak party attachments, but defections could just as well be ascribed to the lopsided way in

Table 2.3. Ideological Self-Categorization and Partisan Self-Categorization

	Percentage of Democrats Who Call Themselves Conservatives	Percentage of Republicans Who Call Themselves Conservatives	Percentage of Conservatives Who Call Themselves Democrats	Percentage of Conservatives Who Call Themselves Republicans
1972	18	43	27	41
1974	17	47	25	41
1976	16	48	24	44
1978	18	54	26	41
1980	17	51	25	41
1982	16	51	25	46
1984	16	52	20	49
1986	18	52	24	44
1988	19	55	21	48
1990	16	47	25	44
1992	17	55	20	46
1994	16	64	15	53
1996	16	66	18	54

Source: American National Election Studies, 1972–96.

which the public evaluates certain candidates. When a Republican candidate is popular, Republicans inevitably look more loyal and Democrats less so. It would be a mistake to interpret every landslide election as a sign that partisanship is waning or voters are changing parties.[2]

These distinctions may seem like splitting hairs, but a number of important empirical insights grow out of them. As we will point out in the pages ahead, party identification tends to be correlated with vote choices among individuals at a given point in time, but this relationship is far from exact. Party attachments are more than mere summaries of momentary vote intentions. Moreover, voting and partisanship look very different when traced over time. Votes can swing markedly from one election to the next without changing the distribution of partisan attachments. Much the same may be said for a variety of other attitudes, such as presidential approval or assessments of the parties' competence. They are correlated with partisanship at a given time but are much more prone to change over time.

Before turning our attention to the contrast between party identification and other attitudes and behaviors, let us first examine more closely the meaning and measurement of party identification itself. We have called attention to par-

tisan identities, as distinct from partisan attitudes more generally. How do we know that party identification is more than a figment of social scientists' imagination? How do we know that party identification is a distinct and enduring psychological orientation and not simply a by-product or summary of other attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors? In answering these basic conceptual issues, we will lay the groundwork for a more detailed discussion of partisan stability and susceptibility to short-term influences.

WHAT DO PARTISAN SELF-CATEGORIZATIONS MEAN?

Why should we believe that citizens harbor genuine, long-lasting attachments to partisan groups? Seven types of evidence speak to this issue. We now consider each in turn.

1. *Partisan attachments are professed repeatedly during the course of a survey interview, even when these attachments are at variance with vote choice.* The strategy behind conventional measures of party attachment is straightforward: Determine whether people identify with partisan groups by asking them directly. In one form or another, these queries ask respondents, "Do you think of yourself as a Democrat, Republican, or Independent?" Although this approach seems sensible enough, it could be the case that respondents are simply guessing or supplying meaningless, random answers. To placate an insistent interviewer, perhaps respondents *call* themselves Democrats and Republicans, but they do not really *feel* like Democrats and Republicans.

Survey researchers have long been concerned with the possibility of vacuous survey responses, sometimes termed "nonattitudes" or "doorstep opinions." Such responses are either outright fabrications or reflect sentiments that flickered at the moment the question was answered but disappeared shortly thereafter. More sophisticated survey analysts have warned against reading too much into the response options that people choose, particularly when respondents are not offered a chance to duck the question entirely. On the other hand, if opinions are real, people should express them again and again, even when they are presented with different response options.

Because the standard partisanship measure has been widely assumed to be both valid and reliable, few surveys have tried to gauge party identification in different ways during the course of a single interview. One important exception is the 1973 National Opinion Research Center (NORC) Amalgam Survey.[3] In the NORC survey, a national sample of 1,489 adults were randomly assigned to three subgroups and interviewed in person. All three groups were initially asked the standard Survey Research Center (SRC) party identification question:

> Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?

Later in the questionnaire, each subgroup was presented with *one* of the following questions about self-definition:

> On this card is a scale with strong Democrats on one end and strong Republicans on the other, and with Independents in the middle. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

> Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat or a Republican?

> No matter how you voted in the last couple of national elections or how you think you might vote in next November's national election—do you basically think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?

Toward the end of the lengthy interview, all respondents were asked the Gallup party identification question, which asks about one's *current* sense of self:

> In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?

Responses to these questions paint a similar picture of party affiliations, notwithstanding variations in wording. As shown in Table 2.4, 87% of the respondents who called themselves Democrats in reply to the SRC question also dubbed themselves Democrats when asked to describe their basic partisan tendencies, holding voting choices in abeyance. The same holds for 79% of self-described Republicans. In general, the correlation between responses to any pair of party identification measures is 0.85 or higher, suggesting that answers to partisanship questions are anything but ephemeral.

To be sure, the distribution of answers varies somewhat, depending on how the question is phrased and which response options are offered to respondents. The seven-point self-placement scale dubs 23% of the sample "Independents," and just 19% of the sample volunteer "Independent" when asked to describe themselves as either Democrats or Republicans. By contrast, 33% of the sample label themselves "Independents" when asked about their affiliations "in politics

Table 2.4. How the Survey Research Center Measure of Partisanship Relates to Alternative Measures

	Democrat (%)	Independent (%)	Republican (%)
Basic self-regard			
Democrat	87	12	4
Independent	7	75	9
Republican	1	5	79
Other (volunteered)	0	1	2
Don't know/refused	5	7	6
N	215	140	107
Forced pair			
Democrat	93	25	4
Independent (volunteered)	2	52	0
Republican	2	13	96
Other (volunteered)	0	3	0
Don't know/refused	4	6	0
N	198	157	94
Self-placement scale			
Strong Democrat	35	0	0
Weak Democrat	34	3	2
Leaning Democrat	26	26	2
Independent	4	52	10
Leaning Republican	0	16	31
Weak Republican	1	1	35
Republican	0	0	17
Don't know/refused	1	3	2
N	188	158	121

Source: 1973 National Opinion Research Center Amalgam Survey.

as of today." Not surprisingly, the precise accounting of who is a partisan depends on the yardstick one uses to gauge identification. In Chapter 7, we point out how variations in the wording of questions may frustrate attempts to compare partisanship in different countries.

It should be stressed, however, that each of these survey measures paints a similar picture of the balance of Democratic and Republican identification. When presented with the standard SRC question, 65% of all partisan identifiers were Democrats. The seven-point self-placement scale produced the same rates of Democrats and Republicans. The figure rose to 66% for the Gallup measure, to 67% for the forced pair question, and 69% for the basic self-regard

item. Thus, a preamble that draws respondents' attention to "politics as of today" produces faintly different answers from one that warns them to disregard past voting decisions. Question wording affects the absolute size of each partisan group, but a similar portrayal of the relative numbers of partisans emerges regardless of variations in wording or response format.

If alternative measures of party identification each tap the same underlying attitude, why would they not be perfectly correlated with one another? Consider, for example, the imperfect correspondence between answers to the SRC question and the basic self-regard item, which are similar in focus and response options. Why do a handful of respondents initially label themselves Democrats but later call themselves Republicans? Why do some respondents variously claim to be partisans and Independents? One possibility is that attitudes are changing during the course of the interview. This explanation seems unlikely, given the evidence presented below suggesting that partisanship changes so gradually that shifts in party attachment are detectable only over a period of years. A more likely explanation (discussed at length in Chapter 3) is that respondents and interviewers make errors when moving quickly through a lengthy interview schedule. Interviewers may misread questions or inaccurately record answers. Respondents, for their part, may misunderstand the questions or response options. At a more basic level, respondents may have difficulty expressing their opinions in rigid and unfamiliar response categories. Even those accustomed to survey research may find it difficult to summarize and distill the myriad of feelings and thoughts that come to mind at the mention of partisan groups. Add to this the fact that respondents must answer a long series of such questions, and it becomes easier to understand the sloppy manner in which survey responses are supplied.

For these reasons, one should expect variation in survey responses, even when underlying opinions remain intact. Respondents may from time to time portray themselves as more Democratic or Republican than they really are. The survey analyst who wishes to take these measurement errors into account therefore uses multiple readings of the same underlying attitude, anticipating that respondents will, on average, give an accurate account of their feelings of attachment. This principle of redundant measurement undergirds well-known tests of scholastic aptitude, personality, and other psychological traits. A single math problem may give an unreliable indication of quantitative reasoning skills because some students may or may not be prepared for any particular math puzzle. But a lengthy math test will effectively differentiate those with high and low levels of mathematical acumen.

A statistical method used to assess the degree of measurement error and differentiate measurement-related fluctuation from true change is called *confirmatory factor analysis.* Applying confirmatory factor analysis to the various partisanship questions asked on this survey (Green and Schickler 1993), we estimate that the standard three-category SRC measure of party identification has a reliability of approximately 0.86, indicating that about 14% of the observed variance in partisanship is meaningless noise. (See Chapter 3 for more on how we ascertain the reliability of a measure.) As we point out in the next chapter, this figure can be expected to vary somewhat across time and demographic groups because different populations have different amounts of dispersion in their partisan orientations. Younger voters, for example, are less likely to have partisan ties. Thus, a greater proportion of the observed variance in their expressed party affiliations stems from measurement error, which means that the reliability is lower for younger samples. Nevertheless, the finding that 86% of the variance in the three-point SRC party identification item is genuine is corroborated by no fewer than eight other surveys in which party identification was measured repeatedly over time (Green and Palmquist 1994). As a practical matter, this finding means that correlations between any two measures of party identification will seldom be much greater than 0.86, even if underlying partisanship were perfectly stable.

Another indication that multiple measures of partisanship ferret out measurement error is that scales built from multiple questions have greater predictive power than measures based on a single survey question. Consider, for example, the correlation between party attachment and preferences for possible presidential nominees. The 1973 NORC sample was confronted with a series of hypothetical "ballot tests" pitting Democrats against Republicans; adding all of these vote preferences together, we created a scale of support for potential Republican nominees. Taken by itself, the SRC party identification item bears a correlation of 0.62 with this vote index ($N = 341$). When we augment the SRC item by adding to it responses to the "regardless of vote intentions" version of the party identification measure, we obtain a correlation of 0.65 with the vote index.[4]

This small increase illustrates how supplementary measures of party identification help to expunge random response error in what is otherwise a fairly reliable measure. We are left with a purer assessment of respondents' party attachments—and a clearer sense that such attachments are genuine.

2. *People who use partisan labels to describe themselves also indicate their "identification with" and "identification as" members of these partisan groups.* Three innovative studies (Greene 1999, 2000; Weisberg and Hasecke 1999) have augmented the standard SRC party identification item with a series of questions designed to tap "social identification" with partisan groups. Using survey measures adapted from Mael and Tetrick's (1992) Identification with a Psychological Group scale, Greene (2000) presented a sample of Franklin County, Ohio, residents with a series of statements with which they could agree or disagree. These statements included "When someone criticizes this group, it feels like a personal insult" and "When I talk about this group, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they.'" Weisberg and Hasecke used a similar scale in their statewide probability survey of Ohio.

This measurement approach is somewhat different from that of the 1973 NORC study, wherein respondents simply repeated the self-labeling exercise using three similar types of questions. Here, respondents were asked to describe their feelings of attachment to partisan groups, with special reference to the extent to which these partisan groups elicit a "we-feeling." Unfortunately, none of these studies reports the relationship between the traditional measure of party identification and comparable measures of social identity. To fill this gap, we crafted three questions for the October 1999 Roper Starch survey, which conducted face-to-face interviews with a national sample of 1,638 respondents. Half of the sample was randomly assigned a battery of social identity questions concerning Democrats; the other half, Republicans. These questions read as follows:

> People have different feelings about [Democrats/Republicans]. I'm going to read three short statements, and for each one, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree . . .
>
> When I talk about [Democrats/Republicans], I usually say "we" rather than "they."
>
> When someone criticizes [Democrats/Republicans], it feels like a personal insult.
>
> I don't have much in common with most [Democrats/Republicans].

For ease of presentation, these three four-category responses were combined into a single ten-point index by adding the first two responses and subtracting the third.

When indices of Democratic or Republican identification are compared with a traditional self-labeling measure, the two prove to be highly correlated.[5] As shown in Table 2.5, 45.5% of all self-described Democrats scored in the top four categories of the Democratic social identity index, compared with 5.1% of all self-described Republicans. Conversely, just 2.1% of all Democrats strongly rejected all Democratic affinities, compared with 25.6% of Republicans. A sim-

Table 2.5. Party Identification by Measures of Social Identification with Democrats or Republicans

	Democrats (%)	Independents/ Don't Know (%)	Republicans (%)
Strong Democratic identity	12.6	0.4	0.0
	5.3	1.1	0.5
	8.8	2.9	0.5
	18.8	4.0	4.1
	16.1	8.6	6.2
	15.5	15.8	8.2
	11.7	35.6	20.5
	4.1	10.4	17.4
	5.0	14.4	16.9
Weak Democratic identity	2.1	6.8	25.6
N	341	278	195
Strong Republican identity	0.3	0.4	14.0
	0.0	0.4	3.1
	0.3	0.7	10.9
	3.4	4.7	19.2
	6.5	5.4	18.7
	8.8	12.9	13.0
	21.0	24.5	14.5
	12.2	13.7	2.1
	18.1	18.3	3.6
Weak Republican identity	29.5	19.1	1.0
N	353	278	193

Source: Roper Starch National Survey, October 1999.

ilar correspondence between self-label and social identity appears when the questions concern Republicans. Fully 29.5% of all Democrats strongly repudiated any suggestion of Republican we-feeling, a response pattern characteristic of just 1% of the Republicans. The sharp separation between Democrats and Republicans on questions of social identity lends credence to the view that self-categorization and group identification are empirically quite similar phenomena.

Self-described partisans vary somewhat in the extent to which they feel a common bond with members of their partisan group, but that is to be expected based on what we know about the imprecise way in which respondents are classified by both traditional measures of partisanship and the brief three-item social identity index created here. By the same token, we detect some partisan sentiment among self-described Independents. Keith et al. (1992) have demonstrated that some of the people who categorize themselves as Independents are closet partisans, who think and act as though they harbor partisan attachments but refuse to describe themselves in partisan terms. In our sample, 17% of the Independents scored in the top five categories of Democratic identification and 12% scored in the top five categories of Republican identification. The three-category designation of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans masks a certain amount of heterogeneity within categories. Still, alternative measures of partisan identification reaffirm the idea that the canonical SRC question elicits genuine self-conceptions.

3. *People offer the same descriptions of their partisan attachments over long stretches of time, even when the political context has changed.* We have seen that people offer similar responses when asked to describe their party attachments repeatedly during the course of a single interview. What happens when people are reinterviewed years later? In Chapter 1, we discussed a survey that tracked parents of high school students from 1965 through 1982. This study not only showed that party attachments in 1965 were strong predictors of the vote in 1980 but also attested to the staying power of party attachments among adults. Of the 855 parents interviewed in both 1965 and 1982, 633 (or 74%) gave the same response when asked whether they think of themselves as Democrats, Republicans, or Independents. Of the 644 respondents who in 1965 called themselves Democrats or Republicans, just 37 (5.7%) switched parties seventeen years later. Interestingly, Democrats were as likely to become Republicans as the reverse, but because there were more Democrats to begin with, the total sample drifted slightly toward the Republican Party. This rate of interparty conversion exceeds what could be expected from response error alone. Yet when one reflects on the remarkable political changes that occurred between these two surveys, the degree of stability in party identification is truly impressive.

The same picture emerges when we look at a narrower slice of time. As noted in Chapter 1 (see Table 1.1), the Watergate scandal that drove Richard Nixon from office and led to a rout of the Republican Party in the 1974 elections did not bring about wholesale desertion from the ranks of Republican identifiers. The NES, which forruitously conducted a panel study spanning the years 1972 to 1976, recorded only modest movement in the Democratic direction during this period. For example, when we look at identification from the Nixon landslide of 1972 to Jimmy Carter's victorious campaign against Gerald Ford, we

find that 76% of the 343 Republicans interviewed in 1972 were still Republicans in 1976. This rate of retention is only slightly greater among Democrats; 79% of the 495 Democrats interviewed in 1972 still called themselves Democrats four years later. Just 3.4% of all Democrats and 5.5% of all Republicans switched parties during this period.

Lest one think that the results from the mid-1970s reflect the special political tumult and partisan disarray of the times, the same pattern of persistence over time holds for other panel studies that span changes in party control of the presidency. For example, when partisan affiliations are traced from Eisenhower's landslide victory of 1956 to the aftermath of John F. Kennedy's win in 1960, we find relatively little movement. Of the 989 respondents interviewed at both times, 761 (77%) reported the same partisan label. Only 42 of the 747 partisan identifiers (5.6%) switched party; the bulk of the movement was in and out of the intermediate category of Independent. Similarly, when partisanship is tracked from the Bush administration of 1992 through Clinton's reelection in 1996, we find modest rates of interparty conversion. Of the 500 respondents interviewed at both times, 351 (70.2%) gave consistent answers, and just 14 of the 312 partisan identifiers (4.5%) switched parties.

We defer to the next chapter a more statistically rigorous treatment of the over-time stability of individuals' party attachments, which distinguishes between real partisan change and transitory fluctuations in survey responses. For now, the point is that simple cross-tabulation of opinion over time reveals a high degree of persistence, even when partisan orientations are measured in very different political climates.

4. *The distribution of partisan identification changes slowly over time.* Much of this book relies on the analysis of panel surveys, which track a set of individuals over time. These data enable us to examine change at the individual level—we can detect partisan change even when the overall proportions of Democrats and Republicans remain constant over time. The drawback to panel data is that they are often in short supply. Panel surveys are expensive, difficult to execute, and therefore rare. Those who wish to chart partisanship over long periods eventually must compare cross-sectional surveys conducted at different points in time. Because each cross section contains a different set of respondents, we cannot distinguish between individual-level change and change in the composition of the electorate over time. Nevertheless, in conjunction with panel data, these surveys convey useful information about the pace and direction of partisan change.

By far the most carefully executed survey of this kind is the American National Election Study, which has gauged party identification every other year since 1952. Recall from Chapter 1 that the proportions of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents have changed gradually during the past half century. In the early 1950s, partisans accounted for more than three-quarters of the adult population. Large numbers of new voters born after World War II caused the ranks of the Independents to swell during the mid-1960s. From 1972 on, approximately 35% of the public labeled themselves Independents. Another trend concerns the balance between Democrats and Republicans. In 1952, Democrats outnumbered Republicans by a ratio of 1.7 to 1. Apart from a brief upward spike in 1964, this ratio was more or less constant until 1984, when it dropped to 1.4 to 1, where it has since remained. In subsequent chapters, we will take a closer look at both the pace of change and the extent to which it was concentrated in the South during the early 1980s. For the time being, we wish only to underscore the basic point that party affiliation changes gradually over time. If pollsters in 1976 had gazed twenty years into the future of American politics, witnessing Carter's demise, Reagan's ascendancy, the end of the Cold War, and the like, would they have guessed that the party identification numbers of 1976 could forecast all subsequent NES surveys within an error of plus or minus seven percentage points?

5. *The proportion of the public identifying with any party tends to be relatively unaffected by whether the survey takes place during an election campaign.* Party identification is properly categorized as an attitude, an enduring predisposition to respond to a class of stimulus objects. People harbor a sense of who they are and how they fit in relation to partisan groups. When asked about this self-conception, partisans will respond in consistent ways over time, allowing for the vagaries of survey measurement. The alternative view holds that party identification is situational. It lies dormant or fades away during periods between elections, only to reemerge when awakened by party competition. Fueling this concern is the fact that NES surveys typically are conducted during election years, prompting speculation about the character of partisanship between elections.

Do party identities wane during interelection hiatuses? The answer seems to be "no." Major surveys occasionally interview respondents during off years, and these surveys show no evidence that party identities wane or wander during these years. The parents in the 1973–82 panel were rock solid in their identification over this period. By the same token, the 1993 wave of the 1992–96 panel shows no signs of distinctiveness. And panel studies that have tracked partisanship over the course of an eventful campaign (for example, the four-

wave 1980 NES panel study) do not show special signs of volatility. In sum, the over-time correlations in individual-level data do not support the claim that the character of partisanship changes amid the campaign season.

These individual-level findings leave open the question of aggregate shifts toward or away from partisan identities. Do more people identify with political parties during national election years, particularly presidential election years? To make the strongest possible case for this argument, we compiled 677 Gallup Polls that were conducted in person between 1953 and 1996. These polls were conducted at various times of year, with increasing coverage during election years. Because these polls asked respondents to reflect on their partisanship "in politics, as of today," they arguably offer a more volatile rendering of partisan attachments than other polls, which direct respondents' attention to "politics in general" (see Abramson and Ostrom 1992, 1994; for dissenting views, see Bishop, Tuchfarber, and Smith 1994; MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson 1992). Thus, these surveys provide an upper bound on the degree to which partisan ranks swell during a campaign cycle.

The dependent variable in this model is the percentage of respondents in each poll who label themselves Independents. Our statistical model uses dummy variables to mark each quarter of a presidential and midterm election year. Each of these markers enables us to compare the proportion of Independents in each election quarter with the proportion of Independents in off years. For completeness, we present the regression results with and without controls for linear and quadratic time trends in the proportion of Independents. Such trends improve the fit of the model but do not alter the results concerning election years. Thanks to the large number of polls at our disposal, we are able to estimate the effects of election years with a high degree of precision.

From Table 2.6, we see that presidential and midterm elections are associated with a statistically discernible but small decrease in the number of Independents. National elections lead to a drop of about one percentage point in the percentage of self-identified Independents, regardless of whether we take time trends into account. The maximum seasonal gap is between an off-year election and the third quarter of an election year. Although this contrast is statistically significant, the magnitude is puny: less than two percentage points. Thus, for example, one might expect to see the proportion of Independents climb from thirty in the wake of the 1984 elections to thirty-two in 1987. At best, these findings lend minimal support to Clarke and Stewart's (1998: 365–69) assertion that the proportion of the public claiming a party identification rises during election years as campaigns "mobilize" partisan sensibilities in the electorate.

Table 2.6. How Independent Partisanship Varies with the Election Cycle

Independent Variable	Regression Estimate	Standard Error	Regression Estimate	Standard Error
Constant	28.01	0.24	19.65	0.34
Presidential election year				
First quarter	−0.37	0.75	−0.18	0.48
Second quarter	−1.11	0.73	−1.04	0.48
Third quarter	−1.53	0.72	−1.52	0.46
Fourth quarter	−1.07	0.81	−1.19	0.52
Midterm election year				
First quarter	−0.66	0.72	−0.27	0.47
Second quarter	−0.57	0.69	−0.73	0.46
Third quarter	−1.76	0.69	−1.68	0.45
Fourth quarter	−0.60	0.78	−0.50	0.50
Years since 1953			0.68	0.04
Years since 1953, squared			−0.01	0.001
R^2	0.02		0.59	
N	677		677	

Source: Gallup Polls conducted face-to-face, 1953–95.
Note: The dependent variable is the percentage of respondents calling themselves Independents.

Indeed, the Gallup results may even overstate the effects of election campaigns if apolitical respondents are especially prone to decline an interview during an election season. The weak effects we detect are reduced further as we shift our attention to surveys such as the General Social Surveys (GSS), which use the "politics in general" wording, engage in more rigorous sampling of respondents, and do not embed the partisanship question within a survey focused largely on current political events. Unlike the NES, the GSS routinely takes place during nonelection years as well as election years. Looking at the proportions of party identifiers during the period 1972–98 (Table 2.7), we see absolutely no evidence that party identification surges during presidential or midterm election years. (Analyzing these data with a regression model that allows for either linear or nonlinear time trends does nothing to bolster the argument that elections foster or resuscitate partisan identities.) Party identification does not seem to depend on the partisan atmosphere of electoral campaigns. Even if the true influence of campaigns lies somewhere between the GSS and Gallup results, it seems clear that party attachments endure even during lulls in party competition.

Table 2.7. How Independent Partisanship Varies between Election Years and Off Years

	Percentage Identifying as Independent	*N*
1972	26.1	1,607
1973	31.9	1,493
1974	31.3	1,461
1975	36.6	1,485
1976	37.0	1,495
1977	33.3	1,518
1978	36.3	1,527
1980	38.4	1,465
1982	33.5	1,851
1983	34.6	1,593
1984	36.0	1,465
1985	30.2	1,529
1986	33.7	1,467
1987	30.8	1,809
1988	34.2	1,481
1989	29.0	1,532
1990	31.5	1,368
1991	32.3	1,511
1993	34.6	1,597
1994	33.7	2,943
1996	37.0	2,898
1998	37.9	2,823

Source: General Social Surveys.

6. *Despite the marked differences between state and national voting patterns, the distribution of American partisanship does not change appreciably when attention is focused on state rather than national political parties.* During the 1980s, impressed by the success of Republican presidential candidates and Democratic congressional and statehouse candidates, scholars began to wonder whether voters had different "levels" of party identification. Southern voters in particular were suspected of harboring attachments to their state-level Democratic parties that did not extend to their national-level counterparts. The underlying assumption was that partisans were able to make peace with their inconsistent voting patterns by distancing themselves from the national Democratic Party while embracing the local one.

This contrast, however, fails to materialize in surveys of the general public. When respondents are asked to report their partisan affiliations with regard to different levels of government, the discrepancy between "state" and "national" party identification proves to be slight, even though the sequencing of the questions invites respondents to express contrasting affiliations at the two levels. Results from a 1987 NES survey show that people seldom give different answers to state- and national-level questions. In this survey, just under 1% (2 of 237) switched parties when asked about state-level identification. (As we saw earlier, simply due to response error, approximately 1% of major party identifiers can be expected to "switch parties.") The marginal distributions of the state-level and national-level responses are also very similar, with a slight tendency toward more Independents at the state level, and the correlation between state and national party identification (excluding those with no preference) is 0.89—close to the upper bound that one could expect from any pair of imprecise measures.

Why, then, the scholarly emphasis on "multiple levels of party identification," which supposedly "contaminate" traditional national measures of partisanship (Niemi, Wright, and Powell 1987: 1,094)? Explanations abound. First is the extraordinary appetite for supposed problems with the traditional measure of party identification. It is no exaggeration to say that every word in the conventional SRC question has sparked scholarly controversy. Here, the phrase "In general, when it comes to politics" is the culprit. Politics obviously takes place on many different levels, and it is natural to wonder whether individuals attend to these different levels when forming attachments. Second, scholars have been led astray by ignoring the problems of response error. Niemi, Wright, and Powell (1987) define a "multiple identifier" as anyone who jumps from one of the three-point partisan categories to another. Thus, weak partisans who variously call themselves Democrats and Independents are said to have "multiple identities." Our earlier results suggest that this pattern is more likely to be the result of coarse response categories and careless responses than of multiple identities. Third, leading published work on multiple identification in the United States relies on surveys of campaign contributors rather than of the general public (Niemi, Wright, and Powell 1987; Bruce and Clark 1998). Given the political sophistication of these respondents and the close contact that they have probably had with the parties as organizations, it is not hard to understand how some of them might harbor different orientations toward state and local partisans. Even here, it should be stressed that very few of these contributors simultaneously identify with different political parties at the state and national levels.

Finally, some of the emphasis on multiple identities in the United States has drawn inspiration from surveys in other countries, where multiple levels of identification seem more apparent. Clarke and Stewart (1987) and Stewart and Clarke (1998) contend that Canadians frequently identify with one party at the federal level and another party at the provincial level. For example, Clarke and Stewart report that in 1974, 1979, and 1980, between 17% and 25% of Canadians identified with different parties at the federal and provincial levels (p. 391). To some extent, this kind of switching reflects the lack of an "independent" or "none of these" option in the party identification question posed to Canadians (Johnston 1992). An unknown number of nonpartisan respondents are forced into one partisan category at one point, only to bounce randomly to another in a subsequent question. We do not wish to rule out the possibility of multiple identities, but as we note in Chapter 7, surveys that are explicitly designed to uncover them often fail to do so.

7. *Partisans find politics more engaging than Independents.* One indication that partisans harbor real attachments to social groups is that they take an interest in the continual competition between parties. Although the level of political engagement varies within and between partisan groups, partisans differ on average from Independents in terms of the way that they look at campaigns. Partisans are more likely to take an interest in electoral competition, to care which candidate prevails, and to participate in elections (Campbell et al. 1960: chap. 5).

The 1992–94–96 NES panel survey illustrates the persistent differences between partisans and Independents. Before the 1992 and 1996 elections, this group of respondents were asked, "Generally speaking, would you say that you personally care a good deal who wins the presidential election this year, or that you don't care very much who wins?" Since both elections featured a prominent third-party candidate, Ross Perot, Independents might have been expected to find these elections unusually engaging. It turns out, however, that 58% of those who labeled themselves Independents in 1992 ($N = 234$) claimed to "care a good deal" about both elections, compared with 76% of Democrats ($N = 187$) and 77% of Republicans ($N = 159$). A similar pattern emerges when we examine responses to the question "Would you say that you were very much interested, somewhat interested, or not much interested in following the political campaigns this year?" This question was asked four times between 1992 and 1996. Fully 40% of Independents never once report being "very much interested," as opposed to 27% of Democrats and Republicans.

In some ways, these figures understate the contrasts between partisans and

Independents. How people describe their own level of interest may fail to convey the sense of engagement they feel when presented with partisan competition. The best example of how partisan sensibilities express themselves is the election dispute surrounding the 2000 presidential election. The national outcome depended on the vote count in Florida, whose electoral votes were sufficient to make either Albert Gore Jr. or George W. Bush the winner. When the votes were first machine-tallied, Bush held a slender margin, and the Gore campaign demanded that certain counties recount their ballots by hand. Exactly how to recount half-punched or unpunched ballot cards immediately became a point of contention, and Republicans charged that subjective standards would allow the Democrats to steal the election. Meanwhile, Democrats alleged that irregularities caused large numbers of Democratic votes to go uncounted, because voters either were turned away at the polls or had voted in ways that disqualified their ballots. The controversy surrounding the disputed election outcome drew far more public attention than the campaign leading up to Election Day.

Partisan sentiment immediately suffused opinions about election procedures. Republicans discovered new virtues in the way that machines count ballots, and Democrats came to appreciate the advantages of hand-counting. When asked by ABC/ *Washington Post* pollsters ten days before the end of the election crisis "Do you think there should or should not be hand-counts of all the votes in Florida?" a national sample of Democrats favored hand-counts by a margin of 67% to 29% (with a small number of undecideds), whereas Republicans thought otherwise by a margin of 18% to 81%. Independents were predictably divided, with 46% favoring and 52% opposing. In the immediate aftermath of the Supreme Court's decision that effectively declared Bush the winner, *Los Angeles Times* pollsters asked a national sample "Do you personally feel that George W. Bush won the election legitimately or not?" Independents gave Bush the benefit of the doubt by a margin of 53% to 37%, with 11% saying that they did not know. Republicans and Democrats were more certain. Republicans felt that Bush won legitimately by a margin of 91% to 4%, with 5% expressing no opinion. Just 23% of Democrats thought Bush won legitimately, 71% did not, and 6% were unsure.

One may argue that lying beneath the surface of partisanship is a desire to elect an administration that will do one's ideological bidding. By this interpretation, Republicans and Democrats tug in opposite directions because of their policy differences, not their team attachments. The aftermath of the 2000 election shows this interpretation to be insufficient. On every question about the

election dispute, the gap between self-described liberals and conservatives is much smaller than the gap between Democrats and Republicans. For example, when asked "If the U.S. Supreme Court had allowed all the disputed ballots in Florida to be counted, who do you think would have ended up with the most votes, Al Gore or George W. Bush?" Republicans with an opinion came down six to one in favor of Bush, Democrats came down six to one in favor of Gore, and Independents were split evenly. By comparison, conservatives sided with Bush by a four-to-three margin, and liberals sided with Gore by a three-to-two margin.

The presidential election crisis of 2000 also illustrates the role of emotions among those who identify with a party. Although the election crisis captivated the entire country, it elicited especially heartfelt reactions among partisans. Table 2.8 presents responses to a Gallup Poll conducted a few days after the resolution of the crisis. Respondents were presented with a series of adjectives and asked whether the word described their "reaction to the fact that George W. Bush has been declared the winner of the presidency." Compared with Democrats, Republicans were vastly more likely to describe themselves as "thrilled," "pleased," and "relieved." Democrats, by contrast, were from six to fifteen times more likely to describe themselves as "angry," "cheated," and "bitter" than Republicans. In every instance, Independents were in the middle, seldom expressing the extreme feelings of anger or thrill. Unlike Democrats, whose primary emotional reaction was a sense of having been cheated, those without a party attachment primarily expressed a sense of relief that the dispute had been brought to a close.

To characterize party identification as an emotional attachment perhaps goes too far in downplaying the role that cognition plays in shaping self-categorization. As we will see in subsequent chapters, citizens do seem to respond to information that changes the way that they perceive the social character of the parties. At the same time, however, the data in Table 2.8 remind us of the emotions that arise from group attachments. Those who root for and empathize with a partisan group feel the emotions of someone who is personally locked in competition with a long-standing and often ungracious rival.

Finally, a less dramatic but more politically significant indication of partisan engagement is voter participation. Table 2.9 tallies rates of self-reported partisan turnout for the 1992, 1994, and 1996 November elections.[6] In each election we see a significant relationship between turnout and party identification ($p < .01$, one-tailed test). Republicans turned out to vote at higher rates than Democrats, and both partisan groups voted at higher rates than Independents. In

Table 2.8. Emotional Reactions to the Resolution of the 2000 Presidential Election Crisis

	Republican	Independent	Democrat
Angry	5	15	33
Cheated	4	29	60
Bitter	3	12	31
Thrilled	59	16	6
Pleased	91	46	16
Relieved	90	60	40
N (weighted)	276	401	334

Source: CNN/USA Today/Gallup Poll Election, December 15–17, 2000.

Note: Entries are the percentage of each partisan group feeling a given emotion. Don't know/refused responses are in each case less than 3%.

1992 and 1996, for example, Independents accounted for more than half of all nonvoters but approximately one-third of all voters. The relationship between voter turnout and political partisanship is among the most robust findings in social science, extending across a wide range of elections. Given that no single vote is likely to alter the election outcome, voting is an expression of support.

Table 2.9. Voter Turnout by Party Identification, 1992, 1994, and 1996

	Party Identification in 1992		
	Democrat ($N = 191$)	Independent ($N = 216$)	Republican ($N = 149$)
Voted in 1992	72%	65%	81%
Did not vote	28%	35%	19%
	100%	100%	100%
Voted in 1994	85%	74%	91%
Did not vote	15%	26%	9%
	100%	100%	100%
Voted in 1996	85%	74%	91%
Did not vote	15%	26%	9%
	100%	100%	100%

Source: American National Election Studies, 1992–94–96 panel survey.

Note: Voter turnout is self-reported turnout in the November general elections.

Those who identify with a political party are more likely to have something to express.

The link between partisanship and political engagement suggests that partisan feelings grow out of group attachments. Although for many people, partisans included, politics is a remote and uninteresting activity, those who identify with partisan groups are more likely to be engaged spectators if not active participants.

SUMMARY

Party identification is anything but an ephemeral "doorstep opinion." When, like attorneys cross-examining an equivocating witness, we quiz people about their partisanship repeatedly within the same interview, we develop an increasingly precise sense of their party affiliations. When we cross-validate these responses with measures designed to tap social identification, it seems clear that self-described partisans harbor genuine attachments to partisan groups. When respondents are reinterviewed many years later, their partisan attachments remain largely intact. Partisan identities seem unusually resistant to context effects, for the ranks of partisans remain relatively constant amid the ebb and flow of campaign activity. We shall see in subsequent chapters that the same may be said of the ratio of Democrats to Republicans; the changing political fortunes of the parties for the most part leave little imprint on party identification.

Our emphasis on the continuing significance of party attachments runs counter to the torrent of scholarship suggesting that genuine partisanship is a thing of the past. To be sure, the proportion of self-labeled partisans declined after the 1950s, not only in the United States but in many other countries as well. Dalton, McAllister, and Wattenberg (2000: Table 2.1) charted eighteen democracies over time and found a statistically significant decline in the number of partisan identifiers in nine of these countries. These trends mean that fewer citizens are impelled by their partisan attachments to go to the polls and to support their party's candidates. That said, it is important for one to maintain a sense of proportion when interpreting this trend. First, in countries such as the United States, the level of partisan identification has rebounded considerably from its nadir in the 1970s. As the U.S. population has aged and as the stereotypes of partisan groups have changed in the eyes of certain regional or social groups, party attachment has grown. News of declining partisanship is out-of-date here and may become so elsewhere. Second, the decline in party attachment has by no means driven partisans to extinction. In surveys conducted since the mid-1980s, approximately two out of three American adults describe themselves as Democrats or Republicans, and when pressed further in subsequent questioning, some of the remaining Independents reveal partisan inclinations, a point demonstrated forcefully by Keith et al. (1992). This is hardly a case of "parties without partisans," as Dalton and Wattenberg (2000) would suggest. Last, as we saw in the previous chapter, partisanship packs the same wallop as it did a generation ago. In terms of candidate preference in presidential races, the gap between Democrats and Republicans remains as large as ever. Although political scientists sometimes wax nostalgic about the days when partisanship really meant something, the fact is that the elections of 1912, 1920, 1924, 1928, 1948, and 1952 all featured large numbers of partisans voting against their party's nominee. Partisanship is alive and well, and as far as we can tell, it is as influential for us as it was for our parents and grandparents.