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Multidimensionality of partisan identification revisited

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MULTIDIMENSIONALITY OF PARTISAN IDENTIFICATION REVISITED

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I retest the assertion that party identification is multidimensional by using the 2000 American National Election Survey. Variables relevant to partisanship are used to examine how voters connect their evaluations of the two parties. The findings support the theory of multidimensionality. The data show that the multidimensional conceptualization of party identification is better for understanding the attitudes and behavior of partisans.

INTRODUCTION

Party Identification has an important central role in studies of American politics. One reason for this is the role that partisanship plays in affecting citizens' political behavior, in particular one's voting decisions. Because of the stability of citizens' party identification, it has remained a vital concept in studies of electoral politics and partisanship. From its origins in *The American Voter*, the definition of partisan identification has remained that of a "psychological tie" to one party or the other, and this tie is of central importance in shaping both their attitudes and behavior (Campbell et al., 1960: 121).

Stemming from the Michigan researchers and *The American Voter*, party identification is conceptualized to be on a unidimensional scale, with Republicans on one end, Democrats on the other, and Independents placed directly in the center of the two opposing sides. In recent decades there has been much research done on the way party identification is conceptualized, particularly whether or not this unidimensional scale actually accounts for attachments, or lack of, for all citizens, as well as their attitudes toward the other party. The traditional measure of party identification indicates that independents, who are seen as holding a position between the two opposing parties, would be a middle, or neutral choice. Recent literature, however, has found evidence that independence is not simply the neutral choice between the two extremes. Those identifying themselves as independents can vary greatly in their personal attitudes toward the parties and their perceived attachments. People can identify themselves as being a pure independent and having no real attachment to either party, while others could also identify themselves as such, but in reality be quite partisan.

This is just an example of issues that make measurement of party identification with a unidimensional scale problematic.

This unidimensional scale of partisanship does not account for attitudes toward other parties, parties in general, or the true nature of independence. For this reason there have been more updated conceptualizations in recent literature of party identification, some of which place partisanship on two dimensions as well as multidimensional scales (Katz, 1979;Weisberg, 1980). A two dimensional scale of party identification is not a linear line with the two ends being opposing sides, but is more "U" shaped. This would mean that in some cases the opposite extremes are at times more alike in their partisan attitudes than they are like the Independents closer to them (Katz, 1979: 150).

A multidimensional view is more complex. From this perspective, partisanship of strong and weak partisans, pure independents, and independent leaners can all be placed on a scale true to actual preferences in relation to the other partisan categories. This view makes it possible to examine in one dimension the partisan identifications of Republicans, Democrats in another, and independents in another. From this multidimensional perspective, Republicans and Democrats do not have to be considered as having opposing identifications, and independents are not simply the neutral choice, but measured and placed on a dimensional scale closest to where their attitudes toward parties and independence place them in relation to the other categories of identification. This multidimensional view also allows for the possibility that a person can have more than one identification, or at least have positive views of seemingly opposing groups.

The level of polarization between the two parties has particular relevance here. Depending on the actual level of polarization of the political parties, this could effect the

assumptions made about the multidimensionality of party identification. If the two political parties are found to be more polarized now as opposed to 25 years ago, this could suggest that party identification has become less multidimensional and more unidimensional, since the views of strong identifiers would be better suited placed along a linear line at opposing ends. From Keith Poole's data of party polarization in Congress, one can examine whether or not the parties in government have in fact become more polarized since 1980. These data show the DW-NOMINATE mean scores of party polarization overall from 1979-2004 and the polarization levels of the two parties developed from roll call voting of members of Congress over time.

In this thesis I retest the assertion that party identification is multidimensional (Weisberg, 1980). The traditional unidimensional scale of party identification is still quite useful for some purposes. For this reason, I discuss it along with the two dimensional conceptualizations to illustrate how a multidimensional conceptualization is better for understanding the attitudes and behavior of partisans. In order to explore these issues, I use survey data from the American National Election Studies from 2000. Hence, in this study I replicate the work of Weisberg (1980), but due to the limitations of the newer surveys, the dimensionality of independence can not be fully explored to the extent that it was done previously. What will be fully explored is how voters connect their evaluations of the two parties.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theory of Party Identification

The theory of party identification as it is used here was originally discussed in terms of group theory by Campbell et al. in *The Voter Decides*. Here the authors think of party attachment as an important factor that acts as a psychological force in determining political behavior. The authors think of party identification as one similar to any other group that would produce standard-setting behaviors:

> In other words, it is assumed that many people associate themselves psychologically with one or the other of the parties, and that this identification has predictable relationships with their perceptions, evaluations, and actions...We would expect high party identification to be associated with conformity to perceived party standards and support of perceived party goals. (Campbell, Gurin, and Miller, 1954, pg.90.)

Taking up this same idea in a later work, the authors of *The American Voter* discuss political parties as having for some people either attracting or repelling qualities, and it is from this that they define identification. From these attracting or repelling qualities of political parties, "an individual may develop an identification, positive or negative, of some degree of intensity"(Campbell, et al., 1960: 121-122). This definition itself indicates that individuals will differ in their levels of identification. Some will strongly identify with the group or political party while others will identify with a political party in a negative way.

Proposing a new view of party identification, Weisberg (1980) addresses the notion of group attachment and its treatment, claiming that it constrains the interpretation of party identification in three ways:

> " (1) It assumes that citizens can identify with only a single party, rather than examining more fully their attitudes toward both parties, (2) it assumes that political independence is just the opposite of partisanship, and (3) it assumes the importance of parties, rather than exploring the person's identification with the party system." (Weisberg,1980: 35).

Further, in a multidimensional space there are three different components of party identification. Those are (1) intensity with which someone likes their own party, (2) the degree they like their own party more than the other, or their extremity, and (3) their attitudes toward independence (p.49). Under the traditional unidimensional view of party identification, all of these different aspects of political identification are inseparable. The theory proposed is that people can have multiple identifications, and that the tradition theory and measures of party identification do not make allowances for this possibility.

Dimensionality of Party Identification

Previous literature has taken issue with and raised legitimate questions about specific methods and timing of surveying attitudes of partisanship (Borelli et al., 1987; Stranga and Sheffield, 1987; Kenney and Rice,1988; and Green and Palmquist, 1990). These authors' works point to improvements in collection of data on attitudes of party identification. Their contributions to the literature, though, do not enhance understanding of possible multiple dimensions of party identifications. John Petrocik (1974) challenges the idea that the traditional party identification scale actually represented one dimension, suggesting that there are other factors or variables that could generate "intransitivities" in the index (Petrocik, 1974). His research sets out to demonstrate the extent to which this index of party identification distorts an analysis of political involvement.

What he finds is that typical conclusions about the behaviors of independents and partisans are not correct, particularly in the case of leaning independents and weak partisans.What is interesting is that leaning independents are higher on some types of political involvement than weak identifiers. These leaners are less likely to identify and vote a straight ticket, but they are higher in political involvement than weak identifiers. The important point is that factors other than partisanship play a role in behavior and attitudes, and these create the "intransitivities" to which Petrocik refers. This means that the categories of strength of partisanship are out of order - - not related monotonically in an ordered system consisting of sets where each set is contained in the previous set. Petrocik finds that the most important factors affecting the likelihood of being an independent leaner or a weak partisan are education, income, race, and region - with education and income making up much of the variance in the probability of being a leaner. Leaners participate in election campaigns at a higher rate than weak identifiers because leaners are more educated and therefore some have higher incomes and enjoy advantages over weak identifiers that are relevant to involvement. The conclusion is that partisanship does promote involvement, but education and income are also influential. Petrocik says that because the partisanship index was developed to predict voting and party attitudes but has since been applied to predict many other things such as political involvement, it should be determined how appropriate it is. It was found that the "index of party identification is not monotonic with regard to all kinds of political involvement"(p.40). This is called a "distortion" in the relationship between partisanship and political involvement, suggesting that alternative ways of measuring partisanship be used that do not include these "intransitivities".

Following Petrocik, more research has found that conventional spatial models of party identification cannot explain all phenomena (Katz, 1979). In reference to research in favor of the unidimensional model, Katz says that while "these findings suggest a dimension on which strong partisans of differing parties must be placed in close proximity, measures of issue opinions suggest that they ought to be placed far apart. Obviously this is an impossibility in a unidimensional space" (p.150). The point is that opposite extremes of the scales are more alike than those in the center in terms of activity and turnout, for example. Using the 1956, 1958, and 1960 National Election Panel Study, he found that if a strong partisan switched parties from election to election they were more likely to be strong identifiers with the new party, rather than independents or weak identifiers. Katz says that "if strong partisanship represents the need to identify with a party, there is no reason to think that this need would be modified by change of preference" (p.158). In other words, they are unlikely to convert, but if it happens they become equally strong in identification with the new party. This conclusion suggests that intensity is distinct from preference, and that the currently used scales of party identification combine two separate dimensions, strength and direction, and for some purposes understanding would be furthered if those dimensions were separated.

Weisberg (1980) argues that it is possible for citizens to have multiple identifications and that independence is not just the opposite of partisanship, but can also be a positive identification. Using factor analysis of indicators of party identification from the 1980 CPS National Election Study, Weisberg finds that there were four separate dimensions to party identification. These were an independent factor, a partisan direction factor, a strength of partisanship factor, and a party system factor. By measuring these

concepts separately Weisberg finds that partisans do not seem to view independents as being in the middle of a partisanship dimension, which would mean that independence is more than a dislike of parties. Additionally, feeling thermometers indicate that some partisans dislike independents and some independents dislike partisans, and some citizens like both partisans and independents, while others dislike both. Weisberg interprets this to mean that the public sees political independence as more complex than the absence of identification with a party. Other measures found that a fifth of strong party supporters also think of themselves as independents, and almost half of the "pure" independents do not consider themselves either party supporters or independents. Weisberg takes this to mean that standard party identification questions do not give them opportunity to describe their position. Generally, the conclusion is that an exploration of partisanship would have to include attitudes toward separate parties, the possibility of multiple identifications, meanings of nonidentification, and attitudes toward the party system as a whole to fully explain the relationships across the different dimensions.

In a later work (1983) Weisberg tests particular dimensions of party identification with new scales developed from new survey questions added to the 1982 National Election Study. From this a new five point scale of closeness was developed that ranges from: Republican supporters, nonsupporters closest to the Republican party, those not closer to either, nonsupporters closer the Democratic party, and Democratic supporters. This new scale is found to work better than the standard seven-point scale. He says that its utility is to test relationships with other variables, testing continuity over time, as well as relationship with relevant political behavior. The new scale reports fewer partisans than the original and over time it performs as well as the traditional party identification scale.

Strong partisans remain so, and fairly predictably, while weak partisans are found to be about as equally likely to be nonindependent party supporters, closer to a party or not, but less likely to be independent (1983: 373). This is said to be possibly because people cannot identify with the identification questions, and are actually "none of the above". The "weak partisan" category includes many "nonidentifiers" who pull down the overall involvement level for weak identifiers. By combining the "no partisan preference" with "independent", understanding of independence gets confused, and there needs to be a distinction between the two. This 1983 subset also includes a new question of independence, which Weisberg says can be combined with "support/closeness" scales to make a ten category classification. What he found, though, was that independence is a separate matter from support/closeness - it can be useful to combine, but he generally does not recommend it.

Knight (1987) tests Weisberg's findings, specifically of citizen ideological sophistication and whether or not correlations are found because of a positivity bias. Knight suggests that Weisberg's findings of correlations of the feeling thermometers are due to differences in conceptualization levels: ideologues, 'group benefit' respondents -- those who judge parties in terms of perceived benefits, 'nature of the times' respondents, and 'no issue content' respondents. The first two are regarded as the top levels of sophistication, and the last are the lowest. This, Knight says, is partially responsible for Weisberg's findings -- that negative correlations in the two higher conceptualization levels are offset by positive correlations in the two lower levels. The reason? There tends to be a positivity bias in feeling thermometer responses: "Citizens will be somewhat more positively disposed toward groups they like, or with whom they identify, than they will be

negatively disposed toward groups that they do not feel attracted to" (1987: 319). The differences in positive and negative evaluations affect the strength of the raw negative correlations between the group assumed to represent polar opposites, -- controlling for positivity should correct this. (1987: 320). She then subtracted individuals 'average' evaluation of all groups from the actual feeling thermometer rating, -- then reports that there are now correlations between all levels of conceptualization. This method is said to correct the positivity bias. Knight concludes that the traditional index of partisanship should be reconceptualized, and recommends excluding independents and nonpartisans from the measurement of partisanship.

Kamieniecki later analyzed the dimensionality of partisanship and the relationship between two of the separate levels, strength and independence, by examining the relationships between measures of both factors and other relevant variables. Using data drawn from the 1980 and 1984 NES/CPS surveys, he finds that 1) independents exhibit greater affinity for their group than disdain for parties, 2) greater partisan strength tends to be accompanied with equal support for parties and opposition to independence, 3) increased independence is related to inconsistent partisan activity, and 4) strength of independence is more a positive attraction to independence than a rejection of parties. These findings challenge the belief that partisan strength and independence are of the same dimension of party identification - they are two separate dimensions.

Classification of Independents

Early studies of party identification treated independents generally as people who lack an affiliation or positive identification with one of the two major parties (Campbell et al, 1960). Since then there have been revisions of how independents are treated in

research, delving further into what attitudes these 'independent' citizens hold exactly and what independence means to them. Growing levels of independents beginning in the 1960s further fueled research, with studies focusing specifically on the concept of independence to clarify the concept and how it relates to electoral politics and voting behavior.

Miller and Wattenberg (1983) is one example of research into independence and partisanship. Their study challenges others who have reported a decline in overall partisanship. Miller and Wattenberg argue that 'no preference' responders have been incorrectly combined with independents, primarily because the two are not mutually exclusive. Apoliticals are distinct from independents in their level of participation; there has not been a growth in apoliticals, but a decline in the importance of political parties generally. This is important because of a rise in the type of nonpartisan that has not been distinguished in the party identification scale -- "someone who is somewhat aware of political matters but lacks responsiveness to the concepts of either partisanship or independence" (1983: 108). Further, there are five types of nonpartisans: those who are unquestionably apolitical, two groups that are not apolitical but that express no preference, one group that leans toward neither party, and a final group that indicates a partisan leaning. Miller and Wattenberg test how independents and no preference survey respondents evaluate the job that political parties are doing. What they find is that no preference respondents are less likely to think that parties are doing a good job, and that they are more likely to split their ballot and support the saliency of candidates over parties. Miller and Wattenberg conclude that these respondents are not necessarily dissatisfied with parties, but are unaware of or ambivalent about the role that they play in the political

process. Independents, on the other hand, may be largely dissatisfied with parties, but may nevertheless feel they perform a useful function (119). This shows that independents are not all the same, and that survey respondents with very different attitudes toward parties should not be put into the same category. Further, the results clearly show that independents are not just people who are 'median' responders who are neutral in their identification with parties.

Craig responds to Miller and Wattenberg's study, saying that no preference nonpartisans and independents are different in some respects, but that these differences are not so much to do with how they view political parties, but of how they view the symbol of partisan independence. Using data from the 1976 and 1980 CPS national election studies, Craig finds that respondents in *each* of the nonpartisan categories tend to differ from strong and weak identifiers in that they are more strongly anti-party. No preference non partisans possess different orientations toward independence, but not toward parties, than do self named independents. Craig finds support for combining no preference nonpartisans with independents on the seven-point party identification scale (281). He concludes that independents and no preference non-partisans are not all that different. Saliency is lower among independents and no preference non-partisans, though there was a decline in saliency and dissatisfaction with all categories. Finally, Craig questions whether or not the seven-point scale is able to distinguish between attitudes toward the parties and attitudes toward independence.

So there are differences in the nature of nonpartisan independents. But there are also those self-proclaimed independents who are not so independent in their actual political behavior. These people are called 'leaners'. Keith et al. (1986) examine the behavior of

this group of independents. When independents and leaners were analyzed separately, it was shown that they were very different in most forms of political behavior (158). Leaners are more loyal to a party than are weak partisans in voting, but not necessarily in other behaviors. If leaners are people who refuse to choose, then their evaluations should be neutral, but what they found are that they are not far off in feeling from weak identifiers. It is possible that people might value a self-image of party loyalty, or open mindedness (178). Party identification questions assume independence is simply the null or balance point on a scale, but partisanship and independence are *not* mutually exclusive. They can coexist in the same person because, like partisanship, independence also has a positive character (180).

Models of Partisanship

The traditional view of party identification is that of a single dimension with strong Republicans at one end, strong Democrats at the other, and political independents in the middle. According to this scale it would seem that Republican and Democratic identifications are opposites and independence is the neutral midpoint indicating total lack of identification.

Next there is a two dimensional scale of party identification similar to that developed by Valentine and Van Wingen (1980). This scale treats independence as a separate object of identification. From this dimensional interpretation, identification with the two parties is not necessarily in opposition to one another, and it is possible to identify with independence and a party at the same time or with none.

The final interpretation of party identification has three dimensions. These three dimensions are attitude toward the Republican Party, attitude toward the Democratic Party

and attitude toward political independence. Weisberg proposes a new or fourth dimension: attitude toward political parties in general (1980). He describes the challenge of introducing a new dimensional perspective of party identification:

> "What is most difficult is to decide how to introduce attitudes toward political parties generally into this spatial presentation. Viewing this as a fourth dimension allows people to like independence and the party system, as well a dislike both, and it allows people to like their favorite party and political parties generally, as well as dislike their preferred party and political parties generally. It is probable that this fourth dimension would be correlated with the others: positively with attitude toward the Republican party and the Democratic Party, but negatively with attitude toward independence." (p.38)

QUESTIONS AND SCALES OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION

In order to test the existence of multiple dimensions, survey questions are used as indicators of each separate dimension. Different questions with different wording measure particular dimensions of party identification. Typically the CPS surveys measure party identification with three questions. The first is called a direction question: "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, and Independent, or what?". Respondents are asked to indicate their first choice from the three alternatives. There is nothing presented about the three alternatives in relation to one another, so the placement from this response is more general. The second question is a leaning question for Independents or identifiers with other parties: " Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or the Democratic Party?" Asked of people who are not identifiers with either of the two major parties, this question taps possible partisan leanings of Independents, or of actual neutrality. The third question in the party identification series is a strength question which is asked of people who indicated identification with the Republican or Democratic party on the first question: "Would you call yourself a strong Republican (Democrat) or a not very strong Republican (Democrat)?" Once identification with a party is established with a respondent, this question gauges just how strongly he or she identifies with that party, rather than merely at what end of the political spectrum are they placed.

The next question deals with political independence. Attitudes toward independence can be measured by thermometer ratings of independents and a question tapping the strength of independence: " Do you ever think of yourself as a political independent or not? (If yes,) on this scale from 1 to 7 (where 1 means "not very strongly",

and 7 means "very strongly") please choose the number that describes *how strongly* independent in politics you feel." What is missing from the new data sets is this question and a thermometer for political independence. Although these items have been used in previous studies, I will not be able to replicate all tests that included the independent variable.

DATA AND MEASUREMENT

In order to replicate Wiesberg's 1980 study of multidimensionality, I use data from the American National Election Survey (ANES). Not all of the question variables needed for a full replication have been available since the 1984 ANES survey. Specifically, these are the questions involving political independence and party support. The variables that are included are listed below.

The first set of variables to be used are the feeling thermometers for the Democratic Party, the thermometer for the Republican Party, and the feeling thermometer for "political parties in general". These thermometers are on a scale from 0 to 100 with a high score indicating a positive attitude toward the subject, 50 being a neutral attitude, and 0 representing negative feelings.

The next set of variables are measurements of party identification. First there is the party identification direction question: "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, and independent, or what?" This question is measured on a scale of 1 to 5, with (1) being Democrat, (2) Republican, (3) independent, (4)other, and (5) No Preference. A person who answers Republican or Democrat will then be asked a question that is used to determine the strength and leaning of respondents' party identification. The strength question reads: "Would you call yourself a strong Republican (Democrat), or a not very strong Republican (Democrat)?" This is measured as either (1) strong, or (2) not very strong. A person who answers independent or No Preference is asked a leaning, or closeness question. The closeness question says: Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?" This is measured (1) closer to Republican Party (4) closer to neither, or (7) closer to the Democratic Party. From the

three party identification questions one can create the seven point party identification scale ranging from strong, weak, and leaning Republicans, to Independents, and leaning, weak, and strong Democrats.

The first test is that of unidimensionality using responses to the party thermometers. This involves the estimation of the correlations between attitudes toward Republicans and toward Democrats, as measured by the feeling thermometers for the two parties. If the unidimensional scale conceptualization of party identification is correct, these tests should show strong negative correlations between the Republicans and Democratic feeling thermometers. What would be an interesting finding would be if the correlations were not overwhelmingly negative, indicating (as Wiesberg suggested) that the identification toward the two parties are not opposing views. In addition to estimating the correlations for these two variables, I calculate the proportion of Republicans with positive, negative, and neutral views toward the Democrats, and vice versa for the Democrats as well.

The next step is to test different models and their ability to predict the vote. First I estimate a vote choice model using the tradititional seven-point party identification scale; then, in comparison, I estimate a model using *party difference*. This can be done by subtracting the feeling thermometer for Democrats from that of Republicans. The party difference is collapsed into five categories from strong Republicans (31 to 100), weak Republicans (1 to 30), neutrals (0), weak Democrats (-30 to -1) and strong Democrats (-100 to -31). There is also a seven-category version of this to take into account the large number of neutral respondents, adding Republican neutrals and Democratic neutrals to the pure neutral category. This too can be tested to find out its strength of vote predictability.

Next, I test three models that use: the standard party identification scale, one using the party difference, and one using the folded party difference variable, adding controls for factors such as ideology, evaluation of candidates and demographic characteristics in all three(race, gender, income, etc).

To test the standard four-point strength of identification scale, I regress this variable on the measures of partisan strength: intensity, as measured by the maximum of the thermometer ratings given to the Republican and Democratic parties, the absolute values of the differences in the party thermometer ratings, and a folded party closeness scale. Originally, Weisberg used this to ascertain what exactly the strength of identification scale was actually measuring, as well as which aspect of identification was making up most of the variance in contributing to strength of identification.

The last test will be that of the dimensionality of party identification. I estimate a factor analysis of the measures already used in the paper. A list of all of these variables is presented in the following section. Weisberg finds four principal components in his analysis, making up three-quarters of the variance. These four components were: a strength of partisanship factor, an independence factor, a partisan direction factor, and a party system factor. From these findings he develops the multi, or four dimensional view of party identification.

In the conclusion I discuss these findings in relation to the polarization levels of the political parties more recently. What could be found is that the political parties are more polarized than at the time of Weisberg's work, which could suggest that the unidimensional view of party identification has more strength than it did in 1980. If the political parties are no more polarized than they were 25 years ago, then I expect to find

similar results. An interesting finding would be if one of the political parties becoming more polarized than the other, having more negative, extreme views of the other party, than the other party identifiers have toward them. This would suggest the influence of other political factors at work, other than an overall increase in polarization between the two parties generally.

RESULTS

An appropriate starting point to consider the multidimensionality of party evaluations is to examine the correlations in individuals' attitudes toward the two major parties. This indicates the degree to which the evaluations of the two parties are related to one another. As I mentioned before, if there is multidimensionality there should be more of a broad range, or distribution across categories of attitudes. However, if these party evaluations are multidimensional, one would expect to see high correlations between the evaluations of the two parties. As one can see, the correlation between the two party thermometers has become more negative in the last two decades. The correlation between the two party thermometers is R= -0.35. While this correlation is more negative than in 1980 (R= -0.17), it does not suggest that the attitudes toward the two parties have moved to one dimension, but it could be viewed as circumstantial evidence of greater unidimensionality. What is found is evidence of at least moderate unidimensionality.

Attitudes Toward the Opposite Party

The mean thermometer scores do not reveal anything surprising about how partisans' attitudes toward each other. Table 1 shows Republicans have high scores for the Republican Party, and Democrats have high scores for the Democratic Party. Strong Democrats evaluate the Democratic Party higher with a mean score of 83.7, than strong Republicans score the Republican Party with a mean score of 78.6. When evaluating the other party, strong Democrats have a mean score of 36.8 for Republicans, while strong Republicans have a lower mean score for Democrats of 32.2. Moreover, weak and leaning partisans' attitudes show patterns of "intransitivities". Figures 1 and 2 show these intransitivities. Weak Democrats evaluate the Democratic party with a mean score of 73.4,

than the weak Republicans evaluate the Republican party with a score of 68.9. Similarly, the leaning Democrats have a mean score of 64.3 for the Democratic party, while the leaning Republicans have more negative evaluations of the Republican party with a mean score of 61.9. From this it looks as though the weak and leaning Republicans just evaluate parties, even their own, more negatively than do the weak and leaning Democrats. However, when looking at the weak and leaning partisan's evaluations of the other party, this is not the case. Leaning Republicans had lower mean scores for the Democrats than did the leaning Democrats of Republicans, but the weak partisans did not. Weak Republican's evaluate Democrats with a mean score of 46, while the weak Democrats were lower with an average of 45.4. While this is not significantly higher, it still indicates that weak and leaning partisan's attitudes do not always align with expectations.

Both Republicans and Democrats have similar mean scores for parties in general. One thing to note about this is that neither of the two have extremely high thermometer scores for political parties, with scores between the mid to upper 50's. So while the partisans like their own party, and have much lower opinions of the other party, they do not rate political parties generally much higher than independents do, scoring them roughly neutrally. These evaluations form in a V-shaped distribution for parties in general. This can be seen in Figure 3. While the Democrats do evaluate the party system in general higher than Republicans (59.1 to 56.1) the categories do fit monotonically with the categories evaluating the party system less favorably as they move toward independence.

In addition to evaluating the average feelings that partisans have toward the other parties and the party system, calculating the positivity, neutrality, or negativity associated with Republicans and Democrats toward the other will enhance understanding.

Table 1. Feeling Thermometer Score Evaluations for each Party value of Party Identification

Party Identification			
	Democrats	Republicans	Parties in General
Strong Democrats	83.7 (343)	36.8 (335)	59.1 (318)
Weak Democrats	73.4 (271)	45.4 (272)	53.3 (260)
Leaning Democrats	64.3 (262)	44.7 (258)	50.8 (259)
Pure Independents	52.1 (188)	51.1 (187)	48.1 (190)
Leaning Republicans	43.8 (227)	61.9 (228)	50.1 (223)
Weak Republicans	46.0 (204)	68.9 (207)	52.0 (206)
Strong Republicans	32.2 (234)	78.6 (235)	56.1 (223)

The number in parenthesis represents the number of cases. Each cell represents a scale of 1-100 of feeling thermometer responses from positive to negative. For instance, 83.7 percent of strong Democrats have positive feelings toward the Democratic Party

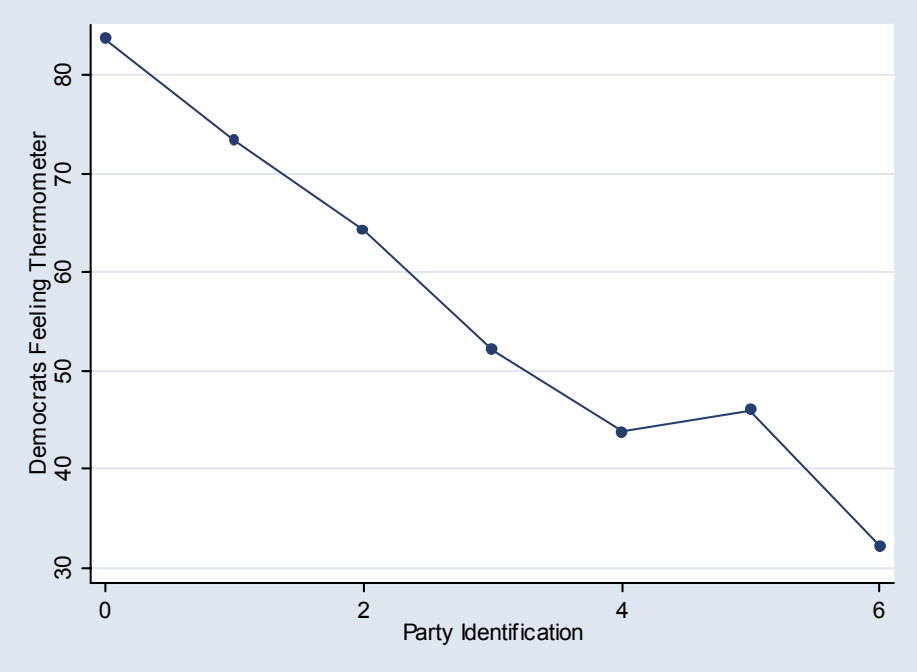

Figure 1. Relationship between Party Identification and Democratic feeling Thermometer

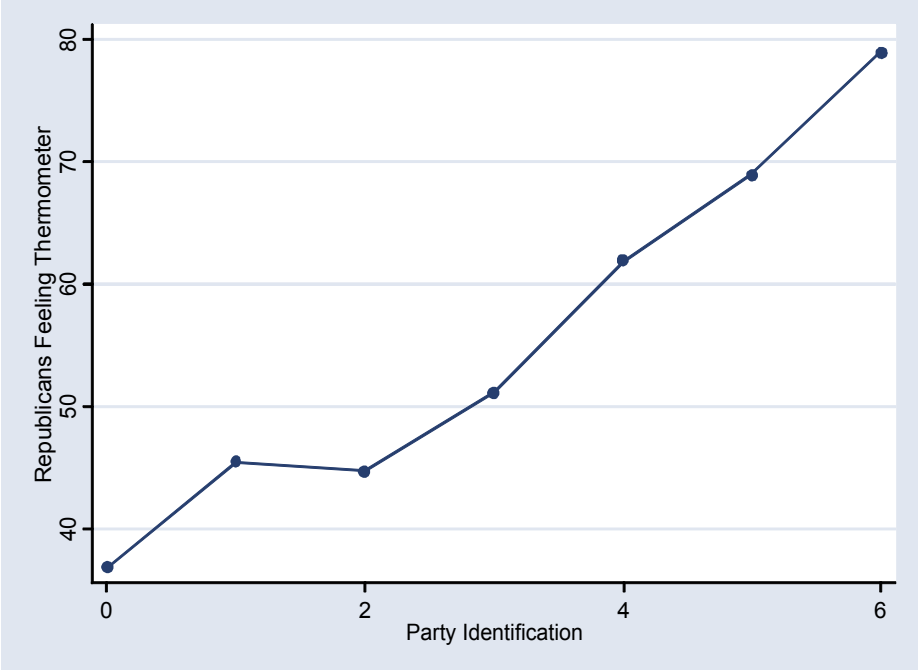

Figure 2. Relationship between Party Identification and Republican feeling Thermometer

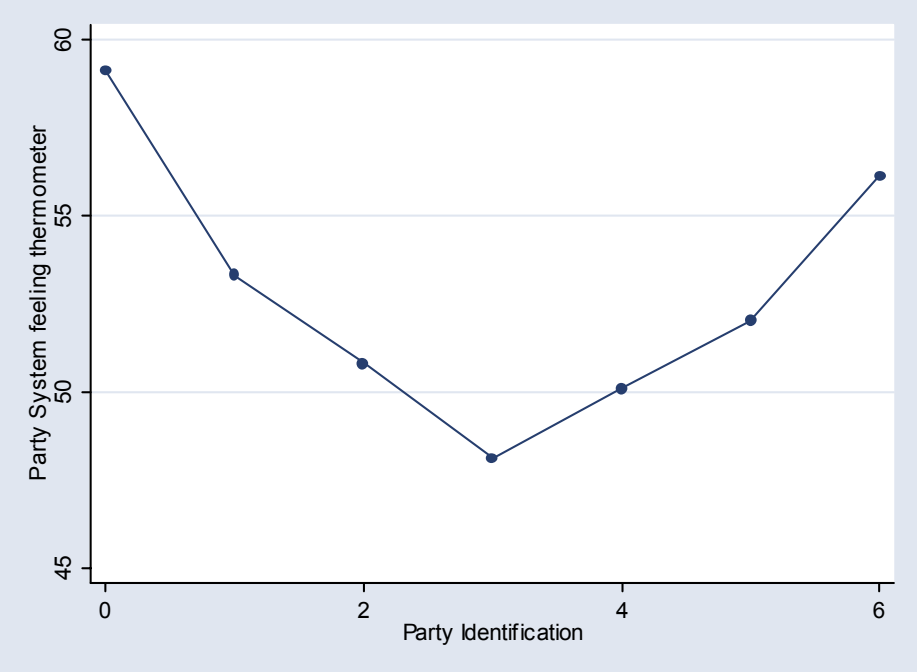

Figure 3. Relationship between Party Identification and Parties feeling thermometer

In Table 2 I show the proportions of Democrats with positive, negative, and neutral views toward the Republicans, and Table 3 shows the proportions of attitudes of Republicans toward Democrats. What is seen is that the attitudes of Democrats with strong, neutral, and negative attitudes toward Republicans do not produce evidence of an overwhelmingly polarized political party system. Over half of strong Democrats have negative feelings toward Republicans, which is to be expected. What was not, however, was that nearly 20% of strong Democrats had positive feelings toward Republicans, and another 20% were not negative, but neutral. If the unidimensional view of party identification is correct, then this should not be the case. Democrats should have very strongly negative attitudes toward Republicans, and only a small percentage if any should have positive feelings toward them. This is especially true since their attitudes toward political parties generally does not seem to explain this finding.

Table 2. Democrats Attitudes Toward Republicans

	Positive (%)	Negative (%)	Neutral (%)	Total
Strong	19.1 (64)	60.9 (204)	20.0 (67)	100 (335)
Weak	26.8 (74)	46.7 (128)	26.1 (71)	100 (273)
Leaning	31.8 (82)	45.7 (118)	22.5 (58)	100 (258)

The number in parenthesis is the number of cases.
N = 1,722

As for Republicans their attitudes were slightly different. While 60% of Democrats have negative feelings toward Republicans, 73% of strong Republicans have negative feelings toward Democrats (Table 3). Also, only 10% of strong Republicans have positive

feelings toward Democrats - compared to their nearly 20%. So it would seem that the Democrats have higher opinions of Republicans than Republicans have of them. The Republicans dislike the Democrats more than the Democrats dislike Republicans. There could be political factors involved such as them being the party out of power in the administration that could possibly explain this difference. Further explanation of this is presented later within the discussion of party polarization levels.

Table 3. Republican Attitudes Toward Democrats

	Positive (%)	Negative (%)	Neutral (%)	Total
Strong	10.3 (24)	73.5 (172)	16.2 (38)	100 (234)
Weak	28.5 (59)	48.5 (99)	22.5 (46)	100 (204)
Leaning	24.7 (56)	45.4 (103)	29.9 (68)	100 (227)

The number in parenthesis is the number of cases.
N= 1,729

Modeling Vote Choice

The next step is to test different models and their ability to predict the vote. Three separate models are estimated with presidential vote being the dependent variable in all three. The first model tests the ability of party identification to predict a person's presidential vote. The second model tests the ability of the party difference measure to predict one's presidential vote, and the third tests the ability of the folded party difference measure to predict the vote. The party difference measure comes from subtracting the feeling thermometer for Democrats from that of Republicans. This variable represents

how much a respondent likes their own party more than the other. The folded party difference variable is created so as to take into account the large number of neutral respondents, adding Republican neutrals and Democratic neutrals to the pure neutral category.

Table 4 shows the rough proportion of variance in presidential vote explained by each of the partisanship measures in 2000. Just as was found in 1980, the party difference measures explain the vote better in terms of variance explained than the party identification scale, with the folded party difference scale accounting for more of the variance than the other two measures.

Table 4. Proportion of Variance in Two-Party Presidential Vote Accounted for by Alternative Partisanship Measures, 2000.

Presidential Vote	**Coefficient**	**z**
Seven Point Party Identification	**1.18**	**18.94**
N 1114		
R2 0.538		
Five Category Party Difference Measure	**1.93**	**18.23**
N 1103		
R2 0.558		
Seven Category Party Difference Measure	**0.089**	**15.79**
N 1103		
R 0.556		

Table 5 shows the standard party identification scale as the independent variable and controls for ideology, education, income, and evaluation of the candidates. All of these variables are included in order to evaluate how much weight these factors carry when making a vote choice for President. Also, Table 5 shows party difference variable as the independent variable as well as showing the folded party difference variable and the independent variable. Both also have the same controls included. The model that uses the standard party identification scale with controls for ideology, candidate evaluations, and income does a good job of explaining the variance in presidential vote, with a pseudo R square of .865. The more educated, the more ideologically conservative, and the higher the income, the more likely to vote for Bush over Gore. These demographics performed as to be expected with education and income being good predictors of vote. Education and income were the two variables that had the most vote predictability of those included.

Table 5a. Model of Presidential Vote, With Party Identification

	Coefficient	z
Party Identification	0.775	5.84
Ideology	0.648	2.40**
Education	-0.402	-2.46***
Income	0.088	1.30
Bush	0.126	8.22
Gore	-0.123	-8.07
N 946		
R2 0.865		

Table 5b. Model of Presidential Vote, With Party Difference

	Coefficient	z
Party Difference	0.940	4.63
Ideology	0.853	3.35***
Education	-0.211	-1.46
Income	0.046	0.70
Bush	0.114	7.84
Gore	-0.120	-7.84
N 940		
R2 0.852		

Table 5c. Model of Presidential Vote, With Folded Party Difference

	Coefficient	z
Folded Party Difference	1.056	4.81
Ideology	0.884	3.45***
Education	-0.211	-0.145
Income	0.045	0.67
Bush	0.116	7.96
Gore	-0.121	-7.92
N 940		
R2 0.853		

*** prob < .01 **prob < .05 *prob < .10

In Figure 4 I show the presidential vote, broken down for each of the seven partisanship categories. When examining the vote proportions of citizens by partisanship, a couple of interesting findings stand out. In particular when examined with party identification the presidential votes show that there are some signs of what Petrocik called "intransitivities". Figure shows that leaning and weak categories are not entirely consistent with predicted behaviors. Republicans should vote for Republicans most of the time and Democrats should vote for Democrats most of the time predictably more so with an increasing identification. Specifically in the case of the Republicans, the weak and leaning categories show similar and high proportions of vote for the Republican candidate - that the categories are not monotonic, or they do not exactly follow the steady upward trend on the scale. The Democrats on the other hand follow the scale of weakening identification and lower proportions of votes for the Democratic candidate. Democrats, those that are weak and leaning, do not vote as consistently with the party they are closest to, as do Republicans.

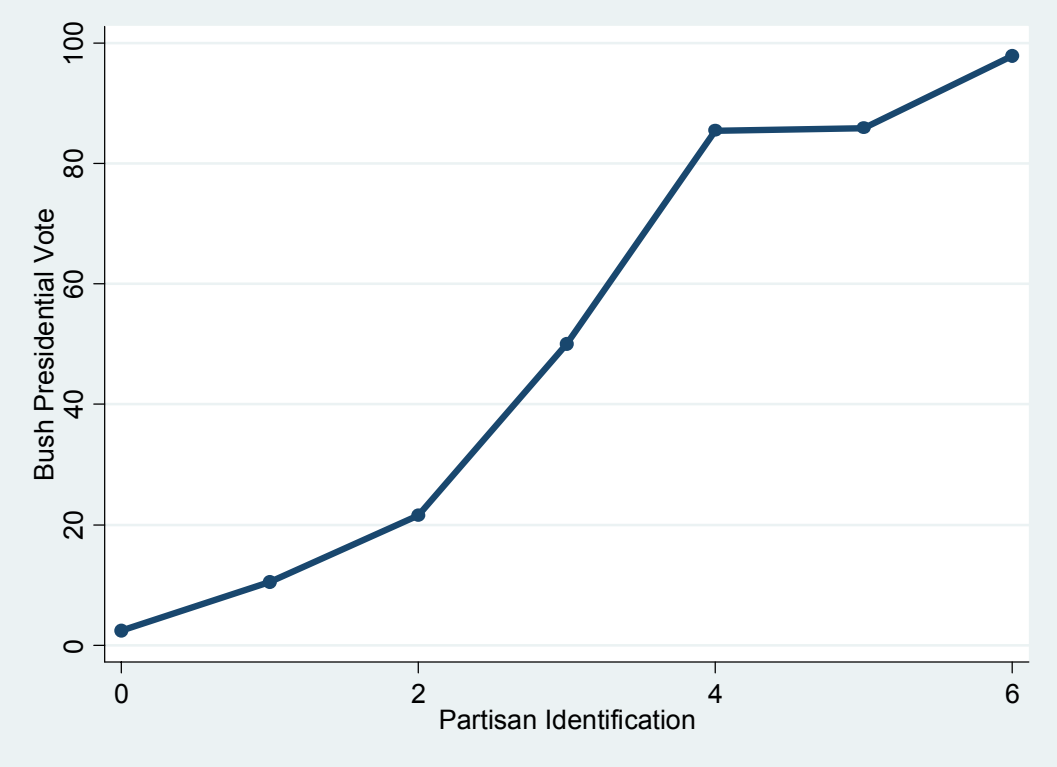

Figure 4. Relationship between Party Identification and Bush vote, 2000 Presidential Election

In order to test what exactly strength of identification is measuring and what aspect of identification makes up most of the variance in strength of identification, it can be regressed on other measures of partisan strength. I regressed the standard four-point strength of identification scale on two measures of partisan strength. There are only two measures of strength included, the maximum thermometer ratings and the absolute value of the differences in the party thermometer ratings. The party closeness variable is taken out because of problems that it causes with the number of observations. In Table 6, I report the results of the regression. With just the two previously mentioned variables 31 percent of the variance is explained. Both variables were statistically significant. This means that both intensity (as measured by the maximum of the feeling thermometers), and how much they like their own party more than the other (as measured by the absolute party difference) are significant contributing factors in how strongly a person identifies with a political party.

Factor Analysis

The final test of the dimensionality of partisanship is a factor analysis of several of the variables that have been discussed throughout the paper. The results of this factor analysis are shown in Table 8. The factor analysis reveals that there are two principal components and a third that has an Eigenvalue of above 1.00 but is not as strong as the first two. There were eight different measures included: Democratic feeling thermometer, Republican feeling thermometer, parties feeling thermometer, party identification, party difference, absolute value of party difference, party folded, and the maximum of the feeling thermometers. These three components that were found accounted for 82% of the variance, with the primary two making up close to 68 percent.

The variables with the highest loadings on the first factor are related to partisan direction: party identification and party difference and the Republican and Democratic feeling thermometers. The variables with the highest loadings on the second factor relate to strength of partisanship: the absolute value of party difference, the maximum of the feeling thermometers, the parties feeling thermometer, and the folded party identification variable. Factor 1 is the partisan direction factor because the variables with the highest loadings are those that measure the direction and preference of party. Factor 2 is the strength factor because both of the factors with the highest loadings measure the degree to which one likes their own party more than the other, and the intensity with which one likes their own party. Factor 3 is the party system factor. These findings are in line with Weisberg's dimensions. He found four factors - three of which I have as well - excluding that of independence. From these results it would seem as though there are in fact multiple dimensions to partisanship.

Table 7 - Factor Analysis

(principal component factors; 3 factors retained)

Factor	Eigenvalue	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative
1	3.21405	1.01846	0.4018	0.4018
2	2.19559	1.00519	0.2744	0.6762
3	1.19040	0.62956	0.1488	0.8250

Factor Loadings

Variable	1	2	3	Uniqueness
Democratic Feeling Thermometer	**-0.868**	0.007	0.377	0.103
Republican Feeling Thermometer	**0.646**	0.574	0.378	0.109
Parties Feeling Thermometer	-0.189	0.504	**0.646**	0.293
Partisan Identification	**0.829**	0.273	-0.103	0.226
Party Difference	**0.925**	0.334	-0.013	0.032
Absolute Party Difference	-0.382	**0.590**	**-0.598**	0.147
Party Folded	-0.318	**0.646**	-0.338	0.367
Maximum of Feeling Thermometers	-0.461	**0.813**	-0.073	0.122

DISCUSSION

This issue of polarization levels of the two parties would be a good place for future research. The main issue tested in this paper is not polarization in particular, but it is related. If there were to be a shift toward unidimensionality in voter's attitudes toward the parties, this would happen during periods of greater party polarization. Although there was not a shift toward unidimensionality found here, could there be more party polarization present? Although it is not the same as examining the attitudes of the public, there are other indications that polarization might have occurred, or could be occurring presently. For instance, the data from Keith Poole shows the difference in the dimension means used as a measure of the level of political polarization. What is important to note first is that there has been an increase in party polarization in Congress since 1980 - - in particular with the Republicans. Poole notes that Congresses 100^{th} – 108^{th} mark acceleration in polarization (especially in the House). The distance between the two parties in the House around 1979-1980 had a mean score around 0.56 and the Senate was roughly the same. In 1999, the mean party difference scores had climbed to about 0.76. in the Senate, and to an even higher 0.82 in the House. This shows a definite increase in party polarization. Also interesting is that the party means on the liberal-conservative dimension show that while both parties have become more ideological, Republicans have become more conservative than Democrats have become more liberal since 1980. Party unity also shows an interesting difference between the two parties. Republicans vote more with their party now than 25 years ago and more than the Democrats do. This was the case in both chambers of Congress, but more so in the House.

These changes could explain why there seems to be more negative feelings about the Democrats from Republicans than vice versa. The fact that in 1999 the Republicans were not and had not been in control of the White House also seems like a possible explanation for increased negativity toward the Democrats. For future research, an interesting addition would be to examine these attitudes toward the other party over a long period of time and administrations to see if in fact there were changes in positive/negative attitudes with the change in party controlling Congress and the White House. This brings up the issue of polarization – and whether or not the two parties have become more polarized over time. From the results of this paper it would appear as though if there has been increased polarization, it is by the Republicans. While polarization and unidimensionality are not one and the same, it could be said that in some ways they could be related. If the two political parties and/or voters are highly polarized at a particular point in time, it might seem as though a more unidimensional view of party identification could be appropriate. Though there seems to be greater levels of polarization among some groups, there have not been significant enough changes to say that unidimensionality is definitely present or will be in the near future.

The findings in this paper show there is more to party identification than the undimensional measure and scale allows. The correlations between the attitudes of partisans toward their party, the opposing party, and parties in general do not give absolute evidence that party identification has become more unidimensional. According to Weisberg (1980: 45), in order for a multidimensional scale to be a better choice alternative scales of partisanship would have to perform better. What is interesting is how Democrats and Republicans evaluate each other. The Republicans seem to dislike the Democrats

more than the Democrats dislike the Republicans. Moreover, categories of Republicans are shown to vote more consistently with their own party for president than some Democratic categories. This paper examines the theory of multidimensionality in the present. There have been changes in attitudes of some partisan groups since 1980, but there are also some findings that have been shown to be consistent with the previous literature. For instance, this paper shows that there has been further polarization growth since the 1980's, but the tests also show that alternative partisanship measures perform better than the standard partisan identification scale does. Although all of the suggested dimensions of party identification have not been tested here, there is still support found for the theory. This also gives support to examining these different aspects of party identification separately so as not to confuse distinctly separate factors.

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APPENDIX:

LIST OF VARIABLES

Variables:

1. Democratic Party Thermometer

2. Republican Party Thermometer

3. Party Difference

4. Absolute Value of Party Difference

5. Maximum of Democratic and Republican Thermometers'

6. Political Parties Thermometer

7. Traditional Party Identification

8. Traditional Strength of partisanship

9. Folded Party Difference

10. Ideology

11. Education

12. Income

13. Bush candidate evaluation

14. Gore candidate evaluation

15. Presidential vote 2000

VITA

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