the *decline*. Many more Americans are conservative than liberal and though both ideological perspectives have been growing, growth has been a bit greater at the conservative end of the ideological spectrum than at the liberal end. The aggregate distribution of these perspectives indicates: (1) that Americans in the 1970s were already fairly well polarized, and (2) that the extent of polarization in the American public has grown significantly since that time.

9.6

LILLIANA MASON

From *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*

There is considerable evidence that, more than in the past, Americans feel anger toward those of the opposite political party, rather than feeling calm in the presence of respectful disagreement. Mason shows evidence from surveys and experiments that partisans of both major parties—Republicans and Democrats—are isolated from each other and have deep-seated animosity toward the "other" partisans, even if they do not know many of them. She shows evidence that the recent surge of anger is a consequence of the alignment of people's ideologies and partisanship. It was not always the case that ideological conservatives were all Republicans and ideological liberals were all Democrats. But today, the high levels of partisan division in the general population are driven by very conservative Republicans and very liberal Democrats feeling tremendous anger toward their partisan opponents.

> Trump has gotten voters who are so angry that they are willing to put their ideological concerns aside. We have never seen voters do that to this extent. They're saying, "We're so ticked off that that's the only message that matters."
>
> —Patrick Murray, pollster, 2016 (quoted in Goldmacher 2016)

In April of 2014, the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) attempted to round up and repossess a herd of cows belonging to a man named Cliven Bundy. Bundy grazed his cattle on federal land in Nevada, for which he was legally required to pay grazing fees. He had refused to pay these fees since 1993, claiming ownership of the land. By 2014, the BLM estimated that Bundy owed the federal government $1 million. As members of the BLM began to round up Bundy's cattle, some members of Bundy's family began protesting and confronting federal officials. Within days, a protest camp formed at Bundy's farm with a sign at the entrance reading "[MILITIA SIGN IN]" (Fuller 2014). Hundreds of self-identified members of armed militias gathered on Bundy's land, preparing for a violent battle against the federal employees. They dressed in paramilitary gear, set up illegal checkpoints, aimed their weapons

From Lilliana Mason, *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2018).

at law-enforcement officials and federal employees, and threatened to bomb and kill people at local businesses (MacNab 2014). The story exploded in the national media, with conservative news sources praising Bundy as a hero, and liberal news sources calling him a terrorist and a "big fat million dollar welfare dead beat" (Vyan 2014).

Conservatives were outraged at the federal government's treatment of Bundy. And, with guns drawn, hundreds of militiamen joined Bundy in expressing their anger, if not outright rebellion, against the government. An attorney named Larry Klayman wrote in support of Bundy:

> Before these government goons do come back, let this message go forth. Barack Hussein Obama, Harry Reid and the gutless Republican establishment leaders in Congress who roll over to and further this continued government tyranny, We the People have now risen up and we intend to remove you legally from office. This country belongs to us, not you. This land is our land! And, we will fight you will [*sic*] all legal means, including exercising our legitimate Second Amendment rights of self-defense, to end your tyranny and restore freedom to our shores! (Klayman 2014)

The case of a local rancher who hadn't paid his taxes was quickly turned into a national fiasco, and a source of potent outrage among conservatives. How did Cliven Bundy so quickly become a national conservative icon? The answer—as Paul Waldman (2014) put it in the *Washington Post*—was that "when conservatives looked at Bundy . . . everything about him told them he was their kind of guy."

Bundy checked off many of the boxes that make up the Republican Party. A strong conservative, a white man, a rural southerner, he represented the convergence of the social identities that hold the Republican Party together. This convergence of identities made it much easier for Republicans to get angry on his behalf, and for Democrats to get angry at him. Conservatives, as they defended Bundy, did focus on a policy aspect of the conflict—the overreach of the federal government. But for many conservatives, particularly under Democratic president Barack Obama, the federal government, as Larry Klayman decried, had become more of an enemy—a set of "goons"—than the foundation of a policy position.

This sort of intense anger is not rare in modern American politics. In 2009, when Congress was debating what would eventually become the Affordable Care Act, town hall meetings across America erupted with angry outbursts. *Politico* reported, "Screaming constituents, protesters dragged out by the cops, congressmen fearful for their safety—welcome to the new town-hall-style meeting, the once-staid forum that is rapidly turning into a house of horrors for members of Congress" (Isenstadt 2009). At the same time, members of the Tea Party held angry protests in Washington. In 2011, in New York City, a liberal group calling themselves Occupy Wall Street protested against a number of economic, political, and social injustices. The New York protests spread to dozens of other cities and were described by the *New York Times* as "Countless Grievances, One Thread: We're Angry" (Lacey 2011). Turn on almost any cable news station during the last ten years, and you can find a political pundit expressing anger at a new political development.

Perhaps the pinnacle of all of this anger has been the unexpected success of the 2016 presidential campaign of Donald Trump. According to a 2016 Pew poll, the Americans who expressed anger at the government tended strongly to be Trump supporters. Trump is a fascinating case because, as a candidate, his policy positions were well known to be quite flexible, if not nonexistent.

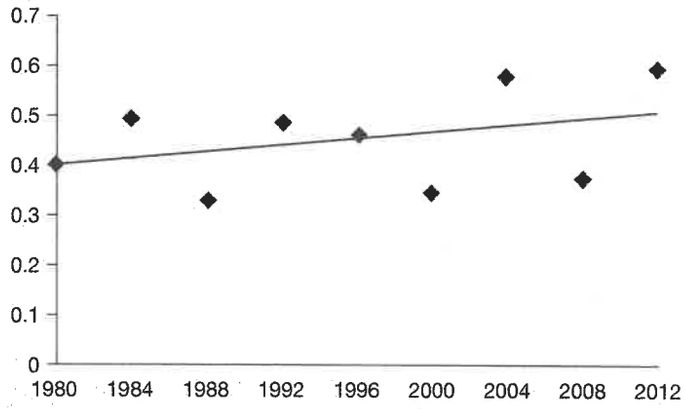
In a 2016 *Washington Post* article, Philip Rucker and Dan Balz wrote, "Donald Trump fits no simple ideological framework. The presidential candidate collects thoughts from across the spectrum. Added together, however, his ideas represent a sharp departure from many of the Republican Party's values and priorities dating back half a century or more. . . . Trump's presidential candidacy has been described as a hostile takeover of the Republican Party. In reality it appears more a movement that threatens to subsume the GOP behind a menu of ideas and instincts that might best be described as 'America Wins.'" In this sense, the Trump candidacy distilled perfectly what Tajfel found in his minimal group paradigm experiments. Winning grows increasingly important as identities grow stronger. To this point, Trump's support was also strongest among those voters who shared multiple Republican-linked identities (Mason and Davis 2016). These particularly include white and Christian identities. Trump's campaign did not tear the Republican Party apart; he spoke directly to the social groups that have aligned with the Republican Party in recent years, and he did so with little real policy content.

The alignment of multiple social identities can directly affect the degree of anger with which individuals respond to identity threats. As identities have moved into alignment in recent years, levels of anger at outgroup candidates have also increased. Though these are simply correlational trends, they serve to set up the story to come.

One crude way to examine average levels of anger over time is to look at one question asked by the American National Election Studies every year beginning in 1980. The item asks respondents whether each presidential candidate "has—because of the kind of person he is, or because of something he has done—made you feel angry." I coded this item so that it refers only to people's feelings of anger toward the outgroup candidate. The numbers in Figure [1] represent the percentage of people who have reported feeling angry at the outgroup candidate in each presidential election year.[1]

This is a rough measure and fluctuates widely depending on the context of the election. For example, Barack Obama's 2008 Yes We Can campaign was generally oriented toward hope and change and was the first election in which an African American was elected president. Republicans (those for whom Obama was the outgroup candidate) had little to openly express anger about.

FIGURE [1] Anger Toward the Outgroup Presidential Candidate



NOTE: Data drawn from the weighted ANES cumulative data file, 1948–2012. Numbers represent the percentage of people who reported feeling angry at the outgroup presidential candidate, coded as a presidential candidate of the party that the respondent does not belong to. Question was first asked in 1980. Pure independents are excluded.

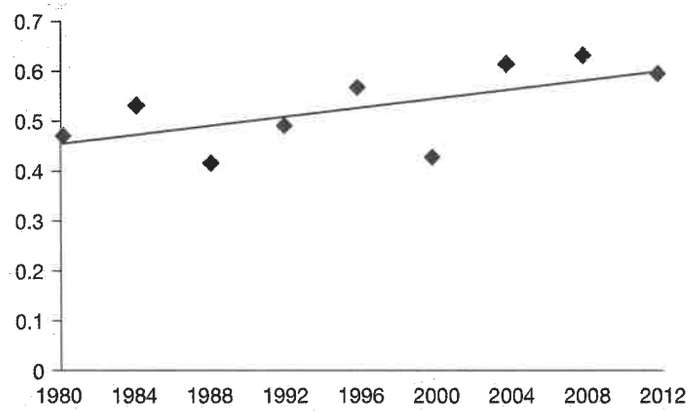
Not only did social norms against racism briefly tamp down open partisan rancor, but it was, after all, a Republican president who had only months before presided over one of the greatest financial disasters in national history. Republicans may have been angry, but in that moment they were not angry at the relatively unknown Barack Obama. (That would come later.)

In the same election, John McCain, the Republican, had a reputation as a centrist, party-bucking politician who could be relied upon to make compromises. Democrats (those for whom McCain was the outgroup candidate) therefore had little to hold against him personally. Their ire was reserved for the sitting president, George W. Bush, who held some of the lowest approval ratings of all time.

An earlier drop in anger had registered in the election of 2000, when voters famously saw little difference between the two major party candidates. But these relatively low-anger elections did nothing to reduce anger in the following elections. If anything, the low-anger elections worked as sling-shots, pulling levels of anger down, only to shoot them back up in the following elections to unprecedented levels. Voters in recent years, when they do feel angry, feel angrier. In both 2004 and 2012, levels of anger reached 60 percent of the partisan population for the first time since the measure was introduced in 1980.

In Figure [1], the general trend over time is drawn as a straight line, which is moving upward, toward more anger. In 1980, 40 percent of partisans felt anger toward the opposing presidential candidate, and by 2012 that number had increased to 60 percent. Even accounting for fluctuations, the trend line indicates a 10 percentage point average increase in the proportion of people reporting angry feelings at their party's main opponent since 1980. The anecdotes of

FIGURE [2] Enthusiasm for the Ingroup Presidential Candidate



NOTE: Data drawn from the weighted ANES cumulative data file, 1948–2012. Numbers represent the percentage of people who reported feeling proud of the ingroup presidential candidate, coded as a presidential candidate of the party that the respondent does belong to. Pure independents are excluded.

partisan rancor and vitriol don't seem to be simply isolated events. There has been a modest but increasing trend toward angrier American politics.

This is not the entire story, however. Americans are not only angrier at their political opponents, they are also happier with their own team's candidates. Figure [2] shows trends in the percentages of Americans who claim they have felt "proud" of their ingroup presidential candidate.

Just as in the case of anger toward the outgroup candidate, pride for the ingroup candidate is steadily, if noisily, rising. The general trend from 1980 to 2012 is a mean increase in pride of 12 percentage points. In the three presidential elections since 2000, around 60 percent of partisans felt proud of their presidential candidate, compared to numbers hovering around 50 percent in the decades before. So, just as Americans are growing increasingly angry at their opponents' candidates, they are growing increasingly enthusiastic about their own.

Combine this anger and pride in every presidential election, and we see a picture of an electorate that is increasingly emotionally reactive. As time progresses, American partisans are more likely to feel angry at their opponents and proud of their own candidates. We are priming the pump for a very energetic battle.

■ ■ ■

In the 2011 YouGov survey, I included an experiment in which respondents were randomly assigned to one of five conditions. Some respondents were asked to read a message that threatened their party. They were told it was taken from a political blog, but in fact I fabricated it based on a number of blog comments I had collected, in order to make the messages as comparable as possible. For Republicans, this message read:

2012 is going to be a great election for Democrats. Obama will easily win re-election against whatever lunatic the Republicans run, we are raising more money than Republicans, our Congressional candidates are in safer seats, and Republicans have obviously lost Americans' trust. Our current Congress is proving to Americans that Republicans do not deserve to be in the majority, and Americans will make sure they're gone in 2012. Finally, we'll take the Congress back and won't have to worry about the Republicans shutting down government anymore! I'm glad that Americans have finally returned to their senses. Republicans should get used to being the minority for the foreseeable future. Democrats will hold our central place in the leadership of the country. Obama 2012!!

For Democrats, the message read:

2012 is going to be a great election for Republicans. We're going to defeat the hardcore socialist Obama, we are raising more money than Democrats, our Congressional candidates are in safer seats, and Democrats have obviously lost Americans' trust. Our current Congress is proving to Americans that Democrats do not deserve to be in the majority, and Americans will make sure they're gone in 2012. Finally, we'll take the government back, and we won't have to worry about Democrats blocking us at every turn! I am so glad that Americans have finally returned to their senses. Democrats should not get used to running the government. Republicans will take back our central place in the leadership of the country. Defeat Obama in 2012!!

Other respondents were asked to read a "blog message" that threatened their party's cherished policy outcomes. For Republicans, this message read:

2012 is going to be a great election for responsible political ideas. After this election we can finally fix the economy using wise tax increases to pay for our indispensable social programs and infrastructure, so that we can create jobs instead of blindly throwing money to corporations and giving tax cuts to the millionaires who caused this mess. After this election we'll be able to improve the health care bill by adding a public option, make sure every woman has clear access to abortions, every child has a chance to learn evolutionary theory in school, and make it easier for all adults to get married if they want to, no matter who they are. Finally, our country will be on the right path again!

For Democrats, this message read:

2012 is going to be a great election for responsible political ideas. After this election we can finally fix the economy by enforcing personal responsibility, using a true free-market system to make sure people aren't handed more than they've earned. We'll be able to shrink the government and get it off our backs, and lower taxes so that hard-working people have a reason to work. After this election we'll be able to stop socialized medicine, prevent the abortions of innocent babies all over the country, bring God back into the public sphere, and make sure that we are a country that respects that marriage is between a man and a woman. Finally, our country will be on the right path again!

A fifth group did not read any message at all. The four messages were randomly assigned, so some Democrats would read the Republican threat message and some Republicans would read the Democratic threat message. When this occurred, I coded this as a message of support for the party.

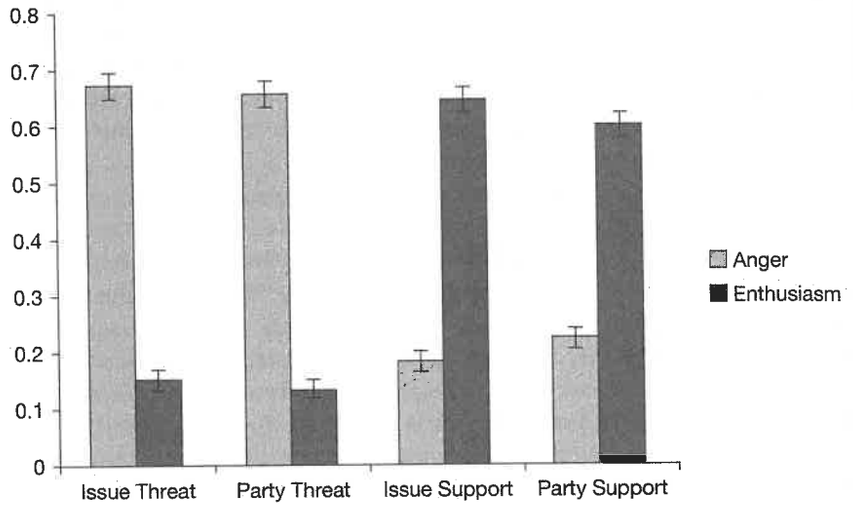
After reading one of the messages, respondents were asked how the message had made them feel. They could answer A great deal, Somewhat, Very little, or Not at all to the following emotion items: Angry, Hostile, Nervous, Disgusted, Anxious, Afraid, Hopeful, Proud, and Enthusiastic. I combined their responses to the Angry, Hostile, and Disgusted items to form a scale of anger, and the Hopeful, Proud, and Enthusiastic responses to form a scale of enthusiasm. In comparison to the yes/no anger responses measured above, this measure created a scale of emotion that ranges relatively continuously from 0 to 1, creating much more variation in the amount of anger or enthusiasm a person could report.

Figure [3] illustrates the main effects of each experimental treatment on emotion. As expected, in the threat conditions, anger is substantially stronger than enthusiasm, and in the support conditions enthusiasm is the main result. The party-threat conditions included language that had the potential to generate stronger emotions than the issue conditions, but, as the data show, emotional reactions to the issue threats are relatively similar to the main emotional effects of party threats.

I measured sorting using the full social-sorting scale, including partisan, ideological, black, secular, evangelical, and Tea Party identities, measuring each, if present, using the four-item social-identification scale. This creates a much fuller measure of sorting by including multiple social identities that may come into play in determining how angry or enthusiastic each partisan can be.

I expected the most socially sorted partisans to be the most emotionally volatile. I thought they would react to the party-based threats with the most anger and to messages of support with the most enthusiasm. I also expected to find somewhat smaller results for partisan identity alone, and much smaller effects among those with the most extreme issue positions. In other words, I expected to see that a conglomeration of identities is most emotionally responsive to threat (particularly group-based threat), that one identity is slightly less so, and that a set of extreme issue positions generates the smallest emotional response to threat.

FIGURE [3] Main Effects of Experimental Treatment



NOTE: Ninety-five percent confidence intervals shown. Bars represent mean levels of each emotion in each treatment, across the entire sample.

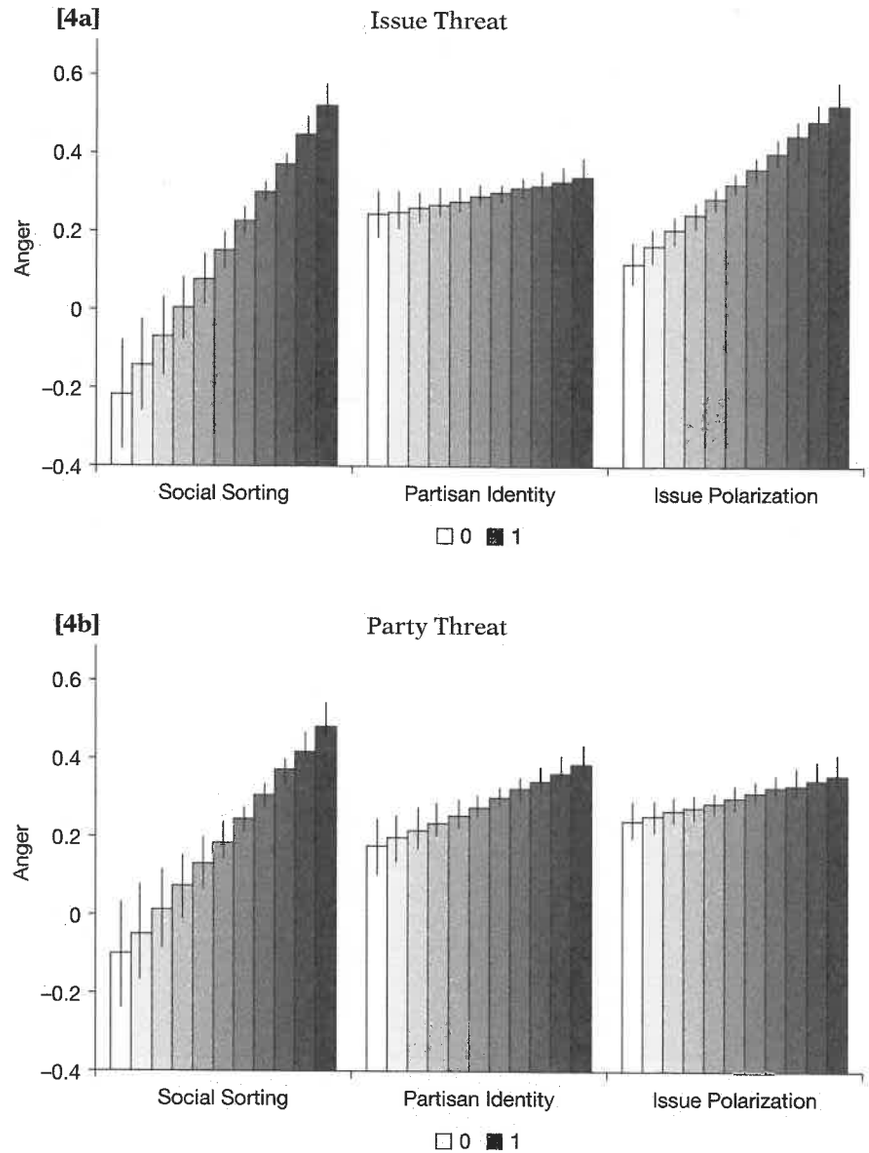
In order to give the issue positions a fair test, however, I included the threats that were devoid of partisan labels and only threatened policy outcomes. If anything were to anger those with strong issue positions, it should be these issue-based threats.[2] Furthermore, the issue measure used here accounts for not only issue extremity but also issue importance and issue constraint.[3] I refer to this measure as issue intensity, due to its inclusion of multiple elements of issue attitudes.[4]

Experimental Results

What I found was relatively consistent with expectations but also slightly surprising. The results are presented in Figures [4] and [5]. In short, the intensity of issue positions does, indeed, generate significant emotional reactions to issue-focused messages. When issue positions are threatened (Fig. [4a]) or reassured (Fig. [5a]), those with the most extreme, consistent, and salient issue positions respond by growing angrier and happier, respectively. However, when party defeat (Fig. [4b]) or victory (Fig. [5b]) is promised, issue extremity has no significant emotional effects. Issue-focused citizens are different from their issue-moderate counterparts in the degree to which they are angered and excited by practical goals but not by status threats regarding their own parties.

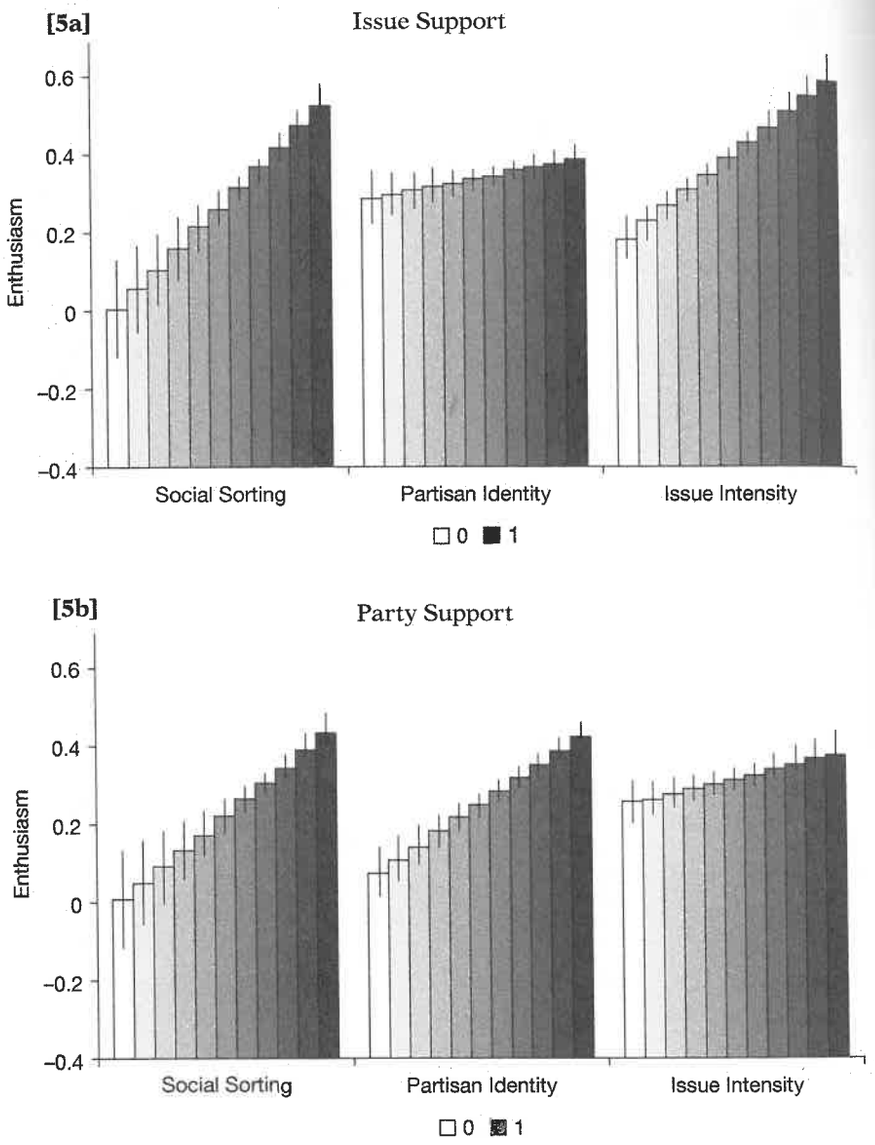
Partisanship has a different influence on emotion. Strong partisans are significantly angrier than weak partisans when the party is threatened (Fig. [4b]) but not when policy success is threatened (Fig. [4a]). They also grow significantly more enthusiastic than weak partisans when party victory is discussed

FIGURE [4] Predicted Angry Reactions to Messages



NOTE: Bars represent the predicted values of anger at each level of issue extremity, partisan identity, or sorting. Ninety-five percent confidence intervals shown.

FIGURE [5] Predicted Enthusiastic Reactions to Messages



NOTE: Bars represent the predicted values of enthusiasm at each level of issue extremity, partisan identity, or sorting. Ninety-five percent confidence intervals shown.

(Fig. [5b]) but not when policy victory is promised (Fig. [5a]). It doesn't really matter to partisans whether their policy positions are threatened. Strong partisans are emotionally engaged by messages of support regarding their party's status—but not by the actual policy outcomes of that status.

Sorting is the unique variable in this sequence, in that it is capable of affecting emotion no matter what kind of message is presented. But this occurs in an interesting way. In Figure [4], social sorting does affect angry reactions to both issue-based and party-based messages of threat. Unlike either issue intensity or partisan identity alone, the difference between cross-cutting and well-sorted identities is apparent in response to both messages. However, one important point to note is that, in the issue-based threat condition, the highest levels of sorting do not generate anger that is significantly higher than the anger produced among the most issue intense. Similarly, in the party-based threat condition, the highest levels of sorting do not generate anger that is significantly higher than the anger produced among the strongest partisans. The main difference between the effects of sorting versus issue intensity and partisanship is found at the *low* end of the scale.

The people with the most cross-cutting identities respond to both types of threat with significantly *less* anger than either the least issue-intense or the least partisan individuals. In fact, for both types of threat, the cross-cut individuals respond with no anger in the case of party threat and with *negative* anger in the case of issue threat. In other words, when these cross-cut individuals read a threatening political message, they remain impassive. These data suggest that Americans are not growing increasingly angry because the best-sorted identities drive the highest levels of anger. They are growing angrier because the people who tend to respond without anger (those with cross-cutting identities) are disappearing. As the sorting continues, the people who have the best chance of remaining calm in the face of political conflict are shrinking as a proportion of the electorate.

A similar phenomenon is seen in the case of enthusiasm, shown in Figure [5]. In the presence of an issue-based message of victory [5a], the most socially sorted individuals are predicted to report no more enthusiasm than those who are the most issue intense. In this sense, sorting is not increasing enthusiasm beyond what it would already be among the most issue intense. However, at the low end of the spectrum, those with cross-cutting identities are significantly *less* enthusiastic than the least issue intense. The 95 percent confidence interval for the least-sorted group in Figure [5a] crosses zero, suggesting that, once again, those with cross-cutting identities have no emotional response whatsoever, even to a positive message.

In the case of party-based messages of victory, the same basic pattern arises. People who are highly socially sorted are no more enthusiastic after hearing a victory message than are the strongest partisans. In this one case, those with cross-cutting identities are statistically indistinguishable from very weak partisans. So the dampening effect of cross-cutting cleavages does not go beyond

the dampening effect of simple weak partisanship. However, one difference does exist. The confidence interval around the predicted level of enthusiasm for those with the most cross-cutting identities includes zero, which means it is statistically probable that these people do not respond to encouraging messages with any enthusiasm at all. In comparison, the confidence interval for the weakest partisan's level of enthusiasm does *not* include zero (narrowly), and therefore, statistically speaking, a weak partisan is predicted to respond with some minimal level of enthusiasm.

Well-sorted citizens are broadly emotionally responsive. They get angry at any message of threat, and they get happy at any message of victory. Whether party-based or issue-based, highly sorted individuals react to political messages with emotional reactions that match those driven by the strongest partisans or the most issue-intense individuals. However, while the emotional reactions of highly sorted individuals match the maximum emotional reactions already found in the electorate, the reactions of cross-cut individuals are significantly less intense than the reactions of any other citizens measured here. Cross-cutting identities dampen emotional reactions to political messages, such that the most cross-cutting identities lead to a complete lack of emotional response. This lack of response exists only in the group of cross-cut citizens that are increasingly disappearing from the American electorate.

NOTES

1. In other analyses not shown, levels of anger toward the ingroup candidate have been decreasing over the same period. For more information on these trends, see Mason (2016).

2. I included each type of threat separately in a regression, controlling for demographic variables (race, gender, political knowledge, age, income, and church attendance), and included interactions between each variable of interest (sorting, partisan identity, issue extremity) and either party-based or issue-based threats. The interactions showed the effect of each of these variables only when the respondent had read a threatening message. In the sorting and partisan-identity models, issue extremity also interacted with threat in order to control for the effects of issue extremity more fairly. All other variables are held at their means or modes. Modes in this sample for the dichotomous variables are female and white.

3. The full set of issue positions is combined into a scale ranging from most liberal on all issues to most conservative on all issues. Each issue in the scale is weighted by its importance, as rated by the respondent. This full weighted scale is then folded in half, to range from the most conflicted/moderate/unimportant issues to the most consistent/extreme/important issue positions on either end of the ideological spectrum. This measure proved to generate the most powerful emotional results for issue positions and is therefore used here so as not to undersell the impact of issue positions. Broockman (2016) has argued that including constraint in the measure obscures important heterogeneity in extreme responses across ideological boundaries. This is true. However, the current measure is theoretically appropriate in the case of this particular experiment, as the models here are run under the assumption that issue positions are constrained. The issue threats are full of party-consistent issue positions. Furthermore, parties constrain issues, and partisanship is a key element of the models. An unconstrained set of issues, for the purposes of this particular model, should be expected to reduce emotional reactivity due to their cross-cutting effects. Including constraint in the issue-polarization measure is therefore a decision that is intentional.

4. It should also be noted that in all the following models, those that examine the effects of sorting or partisan identity control for issue intensity. The issue-intensity models do not control for partisanship or sorting. These models therefore provide a particularly generous test of the effects of issue polarization. Also controlled for in all models are white race, sex, income, age, political knowledge, and church attendance. In the issue-intensity and partisanship models, black race is also controlled for, but, as it is included in the sociopartisan sorting measure, it is not separately controlled in the social-sorting models.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. According to Lupia's and McCubbins' theory, under what conditions can people with limited information make reasoned choices? Give a specific example of a situation in politics that satisfies these conditions.
2. What is the RAS model? What does the RAS model predict about the survey responses of people who do not pay much attention to politics? Why does it predict this?
3. Ethnocentrism is common, according to Kinder and Kam. Describe ethnocentrism and how it matters for contemporary American politics.
4. From the Cramer excerpt, use at least three quotes from people Cramer interviewed to depict rural consciousness that shows its distinctiveness from mainstream (i.e., urban or academic) views of American politics.
5. Campbell thinks certain arguments about polarization in the last few decades are wrong. Summarize how he uses data to refute these arguments and how he shows that Americans have actually become more polarized in recent decades.
6. What evidence does Mason use to show that Americans have become increasingly polarized by partisanship and ideology? What role does anger play in her arguments?
7. Among the phenomena discussed in Chapter 9—knowledge, ethnocentrism, rural consciousness, and polarization—which ones do you think stay constant over time, and which ones change over time given historical circumstances? Summarize specific evidence from the readings to support your claims.

American or *Ethnic American* engage in these activities at more or less comparable rates vis-à-vis each other; similarly, those who identify as *Asian* or with their *Ethnic Group* appear to engage in these four activities at comparable rates. The relationship between racial or ethnic identification and protest activity appears to be minimal.

Although only a modest relationship (if any) is apparent between identity choices and the five forms of political engagement we analyze here, differences in participation by some other indicators of racial and ethnic identity are important. Table [4] summarizes the differences in level of participation in voting, contributing, contacting, protesting, and working with others in the community to solve problems by the two measures of linked fate, commonality with Asians and other racial groups, and experiences with discrimination and hate crimes.

In terms of voting, evidence of differences between respondents with varying levels of racial and political identity beyond the identity labels is scant. Only a sense of political commonality with other racial and ethnic groups has a positive relationship. In contrast, both of the commonality items—with Asians in this country and with other racial groups—are important with respect to contributions, with those holding a sense of commonality much more active in this form of engagement. Likewise, experiences with discrimination and hate crimes are also positively associated with making political contributions. Contacting officials shows a similar pattern to contributing, with strong relationships for the commonality and bias measures. This is also the case for activity with others in the community to solve problems. The same patterns are apparent, but to a lesser degree, for protest activity.

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10.2

JAN E. LEIGHLEY AND JONATHAN NAGLER

From *Who Votes Now? Demographics, Issues, Inequality, and Turnout in the United States*

A common conclusion from previous studies of non-voting was that voters and non-voters were not much different in terms of their attitudes about major political issues. Some concluded that it does not much matter who votes because popular pressure on the government would not change even if many more people voted. Leighley and Nagler offer an important corrective. They focus on issues of economic redistribution and find that voters and non-voters are actually quite different in their preferences over government-led redistribution. Voters are generally more conservative on economic redistribution issues than are non-voters, according to results from analysis of high-quality survey data.

Most discussions of the consequences of turnout focus on whether changes in the partisanship of the voters lead to changes in who wins the election. We believe it is also important to consider the governance consequences of turnout. Who wins an election is obviously important in a representative democracy. But once elected, officials have some flexibility to define their policy agendas and their policy priorities in ways that go beyond partisanship. . . . This argument shifts the focus from how representative voters are of nonvoters with respect to demographic characteristics to how representative voters are of nonvoters with respect to policy preferences.[1]

■ ■ ■

Given that nonvoters are disproportionately poor relative to voters, and have been since 1972, we expect to find sustained differences in the policy preferences of voters and nonvoters in presidential elections since 1972 on redistributive issues.

■ ■ ■

[E]lected officials are aware of the preferences of their supporters. [T]he poor and the wealthy might well support the same candidate and elect her; but when in office, she will pursue the policies preferred by voters (who are disproportionately wealthy) rather than those preferred by nonvoters (who

From Jan E. Leighley and Jonathan Nagler, *Who Votes Now? Demographics, Issues, Inequality, and Turnout in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

are disproportionately poor). That means that for poor nonvoters to achieve substantive representation, it is not sufficient for rich voters to prefer the same *candidate* as poor nonvoters; they must also share the same *issue positions*. This possibility demands that we clearly understand whether voters hold the same policy positions as nonvoters if we are to understand the representational consequences of turnout.

We underscore the importance of this argument by noting that significant differences between voters and nonvoters have important electoral consequences even if voters and nonvoters have identical distributions of preferences across *candidates*. Imagine a world with two dimensions, and that voters who prefer the Republican candidate to the Democratic candidate do so based on economic issues, and voters who prefer the Democratic candidate to the Republican candidate do so based on social issues; but nonvoters who prefer the Republican candidate to the Democratic candidate do so based on social issues, and nonvoters who prefer the Democratic candidate to the Republican candidate do so based on economic issues. Assuming that equal proportions of voters and nonvoters prefer Republican candidates to Democratic candidates, it would make no difference to the *electoral outcome* whether the nonvoters stay home or whether they choose to become voters. But if we assume that elected officials know the preferences of those who vote for them and respond to those preferences, then it would make a tremendous difference to *governing outcomes* if the nonvoters choose to vote.

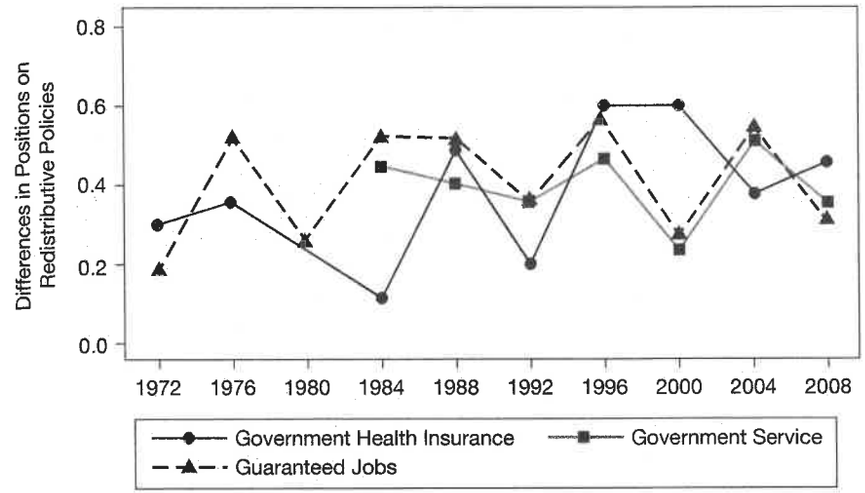
■ ■ ■

We consider citizens' preferences and attitudes as reflected in their political views, their preferences on redistributive issues, and their preferences on values-based issues. Figure [1] documents the policy differences between voters and nonvoters in presidential election years between 1972 and 2008, focusing on three redistributive policy questions: support for government spending on health; support for providing services; and support for government guaranteeing jobs.

We describe these questions as redistributive because they indicate the degree to which respondents support governmental services or policies that redistribute resources to the poor. For each question, respondents are asked to place themselves on a 7-point scale, with the high point indicating the most conservative policy position (opposing redistribution) and the low point indicating the most liberal policy position (supporting redistribution). In Figure [1] we plot the difference between the mean score of voters and the mean score of nonvoters on each issue. Positive values thus indicate that voters are more conservative than nonvoters, while negative values indicate that voters are more liberal than nonvoters.

As shown in Figure [1], we find consistent differences between voters and nonvoters on each of these issues. In each year since 1972, voters are more conservative than are nonvoters in their beliefs regarding how much the government should do to provide jobs, health insurance, and services. More

FIGURE [1] Differences between Voters' and Nonvoters' Attitudes on Redistributive Policies, 1972–2008



NOTE: Plotted values are the weighted mean difference between voters' and nonvoters' attitudes on each issue in the specified year. Values greater than 0 indicate that voters (as a group) are more conservative than nonvoters (as a group) on the specific policy question; values less than 0 indicate that voters are more liberal than nonvoters. All mean differences are significant at $p < .05$, except 1972 for guaranteed jobs, 1984 for government health insurance, and 2000 for government service. Computed by the authors using data from the American National Election Studies Time Series Cumulative File, 1972–2008.

specifically, except for the difference between voters and nonvoters on government health insurance and job guarantees in 1972 and on government health insurance in 1984, the difference between voters and nonvoters is statistically significant in each election. Substantively, the mean differences on all three issues are typically greater than .4 on a 7-point scale. This suggests that voters are about one-half a scale position more conservative than are nonvoters. As we expected, then, there are notable, consistent and substantial differences between voters and nonvoters on redistributive issues—and the conventional wisdom should be updated accordingly.

Next we consider the representativeness of voters on two different sets of issues that we refer to as values-based issues and political attitudes. We present these results in separate graphs. We expect the responses to the first set of questions, including party identification, party ideology, and candidate preference, to be most sensitive to the particular electoral context (i.e., the nature of the issues, campaign strategy, etc.). We therefore expect these attitudes—and candidate preference, in particular—to be most likely to change election by election.

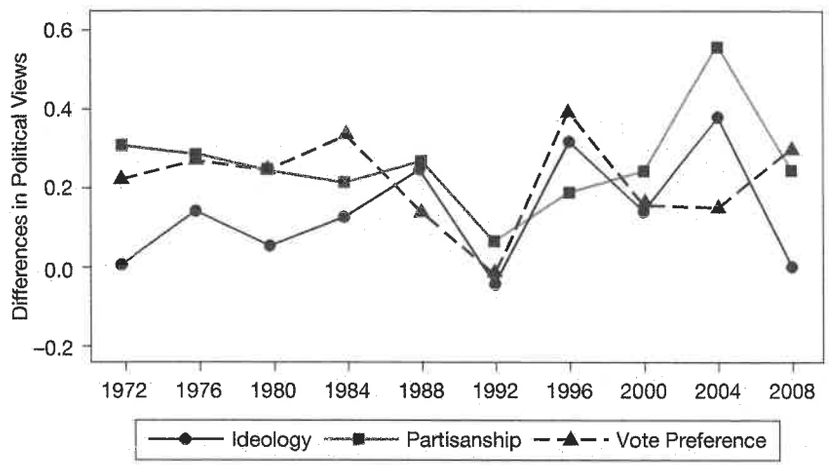
In contrast, the second set of issues [is] largely motivated by some sense of "values": the role of women/women's equality, aid to blacks, and defense spending. While we are not arguing that this is a coherent set of opinions that share[s]

common demographic or attitudinal sources, we do believe that each of these likely reflects more personal, fundamental symbolic beliefs than the other issues we consider. As such, we expect them to likely exhibit little sensitivity to election-specific contexts.

We turn to the representativeness of voters and nonvoters on political attitudes first. The party identification and political ideology measures are based on the standard NES 7-point party identification and political ideology questions. The vote preference measure is based on respondents' thermometer rankings of the two major presidential candidates in each election year. We first compute the difference between voters' evaluations of the Republican and Democratic candidates and then compute the same value for nonvoters. We then take the difference between these two scores and then, for graphing purposes, rescale it to be comparable to values on a 7-point scale.

Figure [2] presents the mean differences between voters and nonvoters on party identification, political ideology, and candidate vote preference for 1972 through 2008.[2] The values that are plotted for each attitude or preference (i.e., the vertical axis values) are the mean differences between voters and nonvoters for each attitude or preference. Based on our general knowledge of

FIGURE [2] Differences between Voters and Nonvoters on Ideology, Partisanship, and Vote Preference



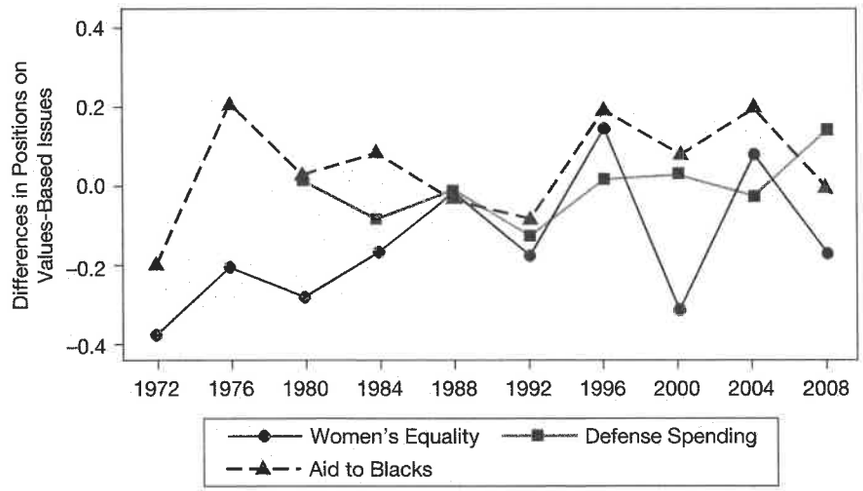
NOTE: Plotted values are the weighted mean difference between voters and nonvoters on each opinion item in the specified year. Values greater than 0 indicate that voters (as a group) are more conservative than nonvoters (as a group) on the specific attitude; values less than 0 indicate that voters are more liberal than nonvoters. Mean differences on partisanship (except 1992 and 1996) and vote preference (except 1988, 1992, 2000, and 2004) are significant at $p < .05$. Mean differences on ideology are significant at $p < .05$ only in 1988, 1996, and 2004. Computed by the authors using data from the American National Election Studies Time Series Cumulative File, 1972–2008.

the interrelationships among partisanship, ideology, and vote choice, we expected these three measures to move largely in sync with each other, and that is mostly what we see. And because vote preference is necessarily tied to candidate characteristics, we see this difference between voters and nonvoters varying the most from election to election, as we would expect.

We note that in many of these elections we observe statistically significant differences between voters and nonvoters on partisanship and vote preference. These differences are statistically significant in six of ten elections for vote preference and eight of ten elections for partisanship. Statistically significant differences between voters and nonvoters on ideology are less common, observed in only two elections, 1988 and 1996, though in seven of the ten elections voters in our sample are ideologically more conservative than nonvoters.[3] Thus we find that voters are more conservative than nonvoters on partisanship, candidate preference, and ideology, although the evidence is more robust for partisanship and candidate preference.

Figure [3] presents the mean differences between voters and nonvoters on values-based issues for 1972 through 2008. Our expectations of null findings

FIGURE [3] Differences between Voters' and Nonvoters' Attitudes on Values-Based Issues



NOTE: Plotted values are the weighted mean difference between voters' and nonvoters' attitudes on each issue in the specified year. Values greater than 0 indicate that voters (as a group) are more conservative than nonvoters (as a group) on the specific policy question; values less than 0 indicate that voters are more liberal than nonvoters. Mean differences on women's equality are significant at $p < .05$ in 1972, 1980, 1992, and 2000. Mean differences on aid to blacks are significant at $p < .05$ in 1976. Computed by the authors using data from the American National Election Studies Time Series Cumulative File, 1972–2008.

here are generally supported. The magnitude of the difference between voters and nonvoters on aid to blacks and defense spending is generally less than 0.1. Larger differences between voters and nonvoters on women's equality are observed, and are statistically significant in four years (1972, 1980, 1992, and 2000), but even these differences disappear in the two most recent elections. Generally, then, we find little or no systematic differences between voters and nonvoters on these values-based issues.

■ ■ ■

We take issue with the claim that voters are indeed representative of nonvoters. [I]n every election year from 1972 through 2008, voters and nonvoters differ substantively on most issues relating to the role of government in redistributive policies. In addition to these differences being evident in every election since 1972, we also note that the nature of the electoral bias is clear as well: voters are substantially more conservative than nonvoters on redistributive issues.

NOTES

1. See Erikson and Tedin (2011, fig. 7:1) for a simple demonstration of the differences between the preferences of voters and nonvoters on economic issues.
2. Mean differences are computed using the NES supplied weights.
3. Ideology could be interpreted differently by different respondents, and differently across elections. Some respondents might be emphasizing a social dimension in their evaluation of ideology; others might be emphasizing an economic dimension in their evaluation of ideology.

10.3

EITAN D. HERSH

From *Hacking the Electorate: How Campaigns Perceive Voters*

Technological advances have enabled campaign organizations and political parties to target specific individuals in "get out the vote" appeals. In eight states (all in the south), people indicate their race—white, black, Hispanic—when registering to vote. Hersh compares turnout rates between African Americans in these eight states to those in other similar states. He also compares turnout rates in the eight states among those who choose to identify their race and those who do not. Hersh finds compelling evidence that if campaigns can know a person's race, that person is more likely to be contacted by a campaign and more likely to turn out to vote. This shows how campaigns can increasingly focus on individual attributes in targeting their appeals specifically and directly, in contrast to previous attempts to campaign using broad themes in entire neighborhoods and sectors.

When public records of race are available to campaigns, campaigns focus more on mobilizing voters because of their racial identity and less on mobilizing voters because they live in racially segregated areas. . . . [C]ampaigns focus more attention on voters' races when public race data are available. [T]he patterns of voter turnout are consistent with the proposition that campaigns behave differently depending on the public data environment.

Public Records of Racial Identity

Voter registration databases in eight states, all in the south, contain records of racial identity. In these states, which include Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee, the public record lists voters as Caucasian, Black, Hispanic, or by some other racial identifier. When citizens register to vote in these states, they are asked or required to indicate their race, and this designation becomes a public record. Because in the United States racial identity is highly correlated with partisan support, when a voter's race is listed in the public record, campaigns latch onto this data point as a key resource for engaging with voters. Because racial identity is difficult to predict in the absence of public race data, campaigns have a more

From Eitan D. Hersh, *Hacking the Electorate: How Campaigns Perceive Voters* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015).