THE IDEOLOGICAL GAP:

BEHAVIORAL TRENDS OF THE POLITICALLY ACTIVE, 1976-2004

A Thesis presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School

at the University of Missouri

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

---

by

JORDAN CRAWFORD

Dr. John R. Petrocik, Thesis Supervisor

AUGUST 2008

The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School,

have examined the thesis entitled

THE IDEOLOGICAL GAP: BEHAVIORAL TRENDS OF THE POLITICALLY ACTIVE, 1976-2004

presented by Jordan Crawford,

a candidate for the degree of master's of arts,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

_____ Professor John Petrocik
_____ Professor Jay Dow
_____ Professor William Benoit

DEDICATION

My thesis is dedicated to my parents, the two most important people in my life, Jim Crawford and Kerry Crawford. Without your love, support, patience, and constant encouragement I would have never completed graduate school.

Dad, you allowed me to survive after throwing your only drafting pen out of the window, after running away in the Disneyland parking lot with change flying out of my pocket, after flooding the family room / living room, after backing the car into the garage, after pumping soap and throwing toilet paper all over the bathroom, after spying on Nick, after covering the entire kitchen with post-it notes (mustard sandwiches?), and innumerable other times that were much less comical where I pushed your patience to the limit.

Mom you never stopped me from singing You're a Grand Old Flag even when you knew it wasn't a two hour long song, from getting a dog even when you knew I wouldn't do all the work to take care of it or train it, from pursuing political science even when you knew engineering would have been a better choice for me, from pursuing graduate school even when you knew I wasn't sure about it, from asking why even when you had to start answering that you were a mom and you read it in a book, and you never once prevented me from chasing my dreams even when you knew they were on the other side of the world.

Mom and Dad, more important than your patience or encouragement, your constant love has fueled me. I couldn't have asked for two better parents. Parents who have allowed me to develop the imagination to travel to the moon only to find a bunch of rocks or hike a mountain when I was 5 even if I was 3 at the time. I am presenting this thesis today because of you. I hope one day that I can offer my children the creative landscape that you have offered me. The power to dream and the hard work to remove the many distractions and obstacles that modern life provides to hamper a child's imagination. I can never repay you for this gift that has enabled me to accomplish all that I have at such a young age. I want you to know that I love you both very much and that your love will always allow me to continue to dream.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I must thank the department of political science at the University of Missouri for the training they have provided me. John Petrocik, your constant guidance, suggestions, and revisions are the reason that I have a comprehensible thesis. Your methodological outlook and patience allowed me to tell a complex story in simple terms. Your editing suggestions pushed me to a new level of coherence that I would not have discovered otherwise. Jay Dow and Bill Benoit have maintained untold patience with me during the revision process.

My friends have provided numerous edits, suggestions, drafts, and comments throughout this endless process. Dr. Peter Haas, of the department of political science at San Jose State University, has spent untold hours providing everything from grammar edits to major formatting and writing changes. Without his work, my thesis would not have made it to the stage where I could write acknowledgments. Kevin Banda looked at more drafts of my paper than he cares to admit and his relentless use of the comment function provided my thesis with additional life and comprehension. C.J. Trent spent numerous hours providing grammar and clarity edits that I would not have caught otherwise. Jerome Venteicher provided me with a larger organizational perspective that helped me reorganize my paper in addition to being solely responsible for an improved title. Mikael Pelz, Fernanda Abdala, Brad Hollas, and Sonja Weick have all also spent their personal time towards helping me create this work. Research is a collaborative process and without these collaborators, others, I would not be submitting a thesis today.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... ii

LIST OF TABLES iv

LIST OF GRAPHS v

CHAPTER

1. Election effects or long term trends?..... 1

2. Do voters need to be ideological in order to be rational?..... 7

3. Testing constraint..... 12

4. Demonstrating constraint..... 18

5. Ideology and Issues..... 24

6. Multidimensional beliefs and factor analysis..... 25

7. Partisanship and Issues..... 27

8. Consequences for the electorate..... 34

9. Implications for future research..... 36

APPENDIX

1. Appendix Table 1: Issue Questions..... 40

2. Appendix Table 2: Correlation between grade and political knowledge..... 40

REFERENCES..... 41

LIST OF TABLES

Table Page

Table 1: Defining characteristics of the most and least complex voters in 2004 ……. 8

Table 2: Explanation of models performed on each of the four cognitive complexity groups... 17

Table 3: Example using variance decomposition to calculate unique effects……. 18

Table 4: Factor Analysis, Number of Factors…….. 26

Table 5: Central tendency measures for the unique effect of issues…….....….... 30

Table 6: Mean percentage of correct answers to political questions……...……..... 37

Table 7: Mean score on educational scale, ranging from 0-1…….. 37

LIST OF GRAPHS

Graph Page

Graph 1: Percent Responding to the Liberal-Conservative Scale…… 19

Graph 2: Percent Reporting Vote……. 20

Graph 3: Liberal-Conservative Scale on the Vote, All Voters ……... 22

Graph 4: Liberal-Conservative Scale on the Vote, Strong Partisans……...… 23

Graph 5: Liberal-Conservative Scale on the Vote, Independents…… 23

Graph 6: Factor Analysis, % of Variance Explained by the First Factor…… 26

Graph 7: Factor Analysis, % of Variance Explained by the Second Factor…… 26

Graph 8: Percent Reporting a Candidate Thermometer Score ……...… 29

Graph 9: Percent Reporting a Party Thermometer Score ……...… 29

Graph 10: Unique Effect of Party ID, on the Vote……..... 31

Graph 11: Unique Effect of Party ID, on the Candidate Differential Score…… 31

Graph 12: Unique Effect of Party ID, on the Party Differential Score……..….. 32

Graph 13: Correlated Component Between Party ID and Issues, on the Vote……..... 33

Graph 14: Correlated Component Between Party ID and Issues, on the Candidate Differential Score..……...……..…..… 33

Graph 15: Correlated Component Between Party ID and Issues, on the Party Differential Score...…….……..……...…… 34

Election effects or long term trends?

Scholars have devoted considerable effort trying to learn how voters think about political issues. This quest has led to the conclusion that most voters think about issues inconsistently and lack an ideological organization of their beliefs (Converse 1964; Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960; Bennett 1988; Zaller 1992; Luskin 1987; Krosnick 1990). Campbell et al. (1960) first discussed an unconstrained and decentralized belief system and argued that most voters think about issues in several dimensions and do not organize their beliefs along a single abstract liberal-conservative dimension. In contrast to these voters there are a small minority of voters who posses a constrained and centralized belief system. These cognitively complex and sophisticated voters, the highly educated and politically attuned, are found to be the most ideological, discussed in the literature in terms of high levels of constraint and complexity. It is valuable to explore the differences between ideological voters and those who lack an ideological basis for their beliefs as these differences have implications for how voters organize and process political information and how elites communicate with voters.

Converse (1964) was the first to structure the debate on belief systems by categorizing the electorate into five groups that each thought about politics in different ways. He described voters in terms of cognitive categories that each conceptualized politics in different ways: (1) Ideologues, (2) Near-ideologues, (3) Group interest, (4) Nature of the times, and (5) No issue content. Ideologues were defined as being highly constrained and highly complex because they organize their beliefs with an ideological

yardstick. "No issue content" voters have no discernable organization for their beliefs. The groups between these two extremes each described the political world differently. Near-ideologues have a conception of ideology, but do not organize their beliefs along this dimension. Group interest voters are able to connect partisan labels with issues, but did not structure their beliefs ideologically. Nature of the times voters do not understand much about parties, ideology, or issues, but vote retrospectively based on their perception of government performance. "Ideologues" and "Near-ideologues" makeup slightly over 10% of the electorate and "Group interest" and "Nature of the times" voters makeup over 45% of the electorate.

Stimson (1975) was the first to divide up the electorate into cognitive complexity categories that roughly organized voters into Converse's descriptive categories. Stimson's measure parsed the 1972 electorate into quartiles based on an even combination of factual political questions, such as names of prominent political figures, and levels of education. Stimson's analysis of these groups provided evidence that there were systematic differences in how each of Converse's groups thought about politics. Specifically, the most complex twenty-five percent of the electorate vote their ideology, party identification, and issue positions at twice the consistency of the least complex twenty-five percent. While Stimson's quartiles seemed to organize Ideologues and Near-ideologues together in his most complex group, his groups seem to accurately capture the differences in the way that each group conceptualizes politics. Stimson's empirical contribution to the literature provided an important test of Converse's cognitive categories; only those voters with high levels of constraint organize their stances on political issues along the liberal-conservative dimension, consistent with their party identification.

Mapping Stimson's categories of voters over multiple elections tests the degree to which Converse's categories vary over time. Extending his study provides more information to support Converse's assertion that Ideologues and Near-ideologues think about politics differently than other groups in the electorate. By examining each of these groups in additional elections I am able to test the effects of any one particular election on each of the groups. In addition to possible single election effects, there may be a constant change among the groups over time. If these groups have grown further apart in their understanding of politics, either in single elections or over time, then there are normative consequences in terms of each group's ability to rationally engage in politics. For example, if the most complex voters are evolving ideologically, also described in terms of increasing constraint, then they will be able to organize their political beliefs more consistently, better comprehend elite discourse, and be able to make more informed and consistent voting decisions.

Presidential campaigns may provide single-election effects that educate voters. *The Changing American Voter* (Nie, Verba, and Petrocik 1976) suggested that when candidates take extreme issue positions voters are able to structure their vote around the issues, as there is a clear difference between the two candidates' positions. Candidates who take opposing ideological positions on issues provide voters with a better distinction and a better mechanism to differentiate the candidates and the parties. Other factors may provide information to voters to assist them in their ability to differentiate the candidates and the parties such as get out the vote campaigns, increased campaign advertising, and a charged political climate that can motivate voters to tune into politics. The least complex twenty-five percent of the electorate, who primarily represent Converse's No issue content group, should not be effected by changes in elections, as they are generally not

involved in politics. However, the two groups between the most complex and the least complex, Nature of the time and Group interest, should be the most affected by single elections. These two groups pay enough attention to politics in order to pickup cues from election campaigns, but should not carry these cues from one election to the next as they have a shorter political attention span than the most politically involved. The level of constraint that these voters display should depend on the issues, candidates, and political landscape of the election. Conversely, the most sophisticated voters should carry the information they learn from one election to the next.

High complexity voters should be able to learn from each election cycle, as they are the most tuned into politics and most educated. There are several reasons why these voters should see a consistently increasing connection between their ideology, their partisanship, and their issue positions. Over the last forty years, the Southern realignment and higher levels of elite ideological polarization (Bartels 2000) have been responsible for differentiating the parties. The increasing differences between the parties should allow all voters a clearer choice in terms of policy and ideology. However, the cues from these changes should be most evident only to the most politically sophisticated as this group is deeply involved and pays constant attention to politics. While there may be increasing constraint evident in less constrained groups, these differences should be temporal and depend on election effects since these less ideological voters may only receive and retain political cues from single elections. The most constrained should not only retain information from one election cycle to the next, but also should be able to receive and organize additional political information between election cycles.

One goal of this analysis is to determine how the most ideological and least ideological voters have changed over time. These high complexity voters have consistently turned out in high numbers since 1976. Plus, this segment of the electorate sees a stronger connection between their partisanship and their issue positions when voting, evaluating candidates, and evaluating parties. While issues by themselves do not matter for any of the groups, the high complexity group is organizing their ideology, partisanship, and issues even more consistently. I find that the most complex voters seem to transcend the effects of specific elections and have consistently connected their issues and their partisanship at much higher rates since 1976. Because my analysis divides the electorate into four equal groups, the largest differences are between the low complexity group and the high complexity group. These low complexity voters do not seem to be effected by any long-term political trends or any specific election. The least complex voters never organize their beliefs in terms of ideology and do not see any connection between their partisanship and issues. With the exception of a nearly 20% decline in reported voting, this group has remained largely invariant since 1976, not seeing any connection between their issues, ideology, or partisanship when voting, evaluating candidates, and evaluating parties. For this segment of the electorate, party identification is all that matters, and issues have no practical effect on how they think about their vote, the candidates, or the parties.

Since the electorate was divided into quartiles, a full fifty percent of the electorate fall between the high complexity group and the low complexity group; these groups represent Converse's Group interest and Nature of the times voters. Members of the two groups in between the highest and lowest complexity voters do not seem to have demonstrated a clear trend during the period of my study. While their turnout fluctuates

with each election, they voted at about the same rate in 2004 as they did in 1976. Their ideology and their vote are not strongly correlated and change with each election, but they have made slight overall increases in the relationship between their issue positions and partisanship in terms of vote choice, candidate evaluations, and party evaluations. While most my of measures show higher levels of constraint in 2004 than in 1976 for this half of the electorate, caution is in order when interpreting these results as a trend towards increasing constraint this segment of the electorate. First, the increase in the level of constraint between 1976 and 2004 for either of the two groups with medium levels of complexity are not as large as the differences for the most politically complex between 1976 and 2004. Second, these groups did not consistently demonstrate higher levels of constraint from one election to the next, as in numerous elections they were less constrained than in previous elections. Finally, almost all groups exist at a similar low level of constraint in 1976. This point should be underscored as it means that the increasing constraint of the most complex voters has implications not only for how this group interprets political cues, but also for how political elites communicate with voters. The large gap between the least and most complex voters in 2004 did not exist in 1976. This may lead candidates and political elites to address the most complex group in more ideological ways today than they did in 1976.

Do voters need to be ideological in order to be rational?

Political scientists have used different terminology to categorize voters into groups with similar attributes. Converse (1964) first postulated that an ideological belief system would be constrained. Constraint refers to the degree to which voters organize their beliefs consistently along one powerful dimension. Sophisticated voters, who are highly educated and in tune with politics, are expected to be the most constrained. In addition, a sophisticated voter is much more consistent in his or her vote, issue positions, and partisanship than a non-sophisticated voter. The most sophisticated voters are empirically the most constrained, the most ideological, and the most cognitively complex (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960; Converse 1964; Zaller 1992; Stimson 1975). Since constraint, complexity, sophistication, and cognitive ability all evoke a very similar concept, they will be used interchangeably in this analysis. Sophistication and high cognitive ability are terms that describe the highly educated who pay attention to politics. These individuals think about politics in highly ideological terms, making them the most constrained and complex voters. Table 1 summarizes the qualities of the most and least constrained voters empirically in 2004. While some of these qualities, such as the most complex voting according to their ideology, describe the differences between the most and least complex better in the 2004 electorate than the 1976 electorate, these differences are still evident in 1976.

Table 1: Defining characteristics of the most and least complex voters in 2004	
Most complex Most constrained Most sophisticated Most cognitive ability	1. Pay more attention to politics 2. Are highly educated 3. Think about issues in ideological terms (one dimension) 4. Vote according to their partisanship and ideology 5. Connect their ideology to their partisanship 6. Judge candidates and parties through an ideological and partisan lens 7. Vote in high numbers
Least complex Least constrained Least sophisticated Least cognitive ability	1. Pay little attention to politics 2. Are less educated 3. Think about issues on multiple dimensions 4. Often vote according to their partisanship, but not consistently 5. Does not connect their partisanship to their ideology 6. Does not vote according to their ideology 7. Judge candidates and parties through mainly a partisan lens 8. Do not vote in high numbers

Campbell et al. (1960) sparked a debate that has continued for nearly half a century when they declared that issues play almost no role in how most Americans voters, who are unconstrained, structure their beliefs. They suggested that most of the electorate think about politics primarily in terms of partisan attachment. In addition, they were the first to suggest that political elites, later defined as the most constrained, in the electorate were the only ones who organize their issue beliefs around their ideology, both consistent with their party identification. Many scholars provide further evidence that those who are heavily involved in politics have more consistent attitudes (Nie, Verba, and Petrocik 1979; Axelrod 1976; Bishop, Tuchfarber, and Oldendick 1978; Converse 1964; Hagner and Pierce 1983; Judd, Krosnick, and Milburn 1981). Conversely, those voters who are not involved in politics do not tend to align their beliefs in terms of ideology. For example, Converse (1964) suggests that the least constrained in the electorate are selecting responses simply to appease the interviewer and do not have any stable beliefs on issues, ideological or otherwise.

However, not all scholars agree with the conventional wisdom that the least educated and politically knowledgeable do not organize their beliefs rationally. Many scholars have argued that this instability is due to measurement error (Judd, Krosnick, and Milburn 1981; Achen 1975, 1983; Dean and Moran 1977; Erikson 1979; Feldman 1988). This measurement error is often described in terms of question fluctuation or imprecise wording. Taylor and Fiske (1978) argue that some voters find different issues salient to them at different times. Most of these scholars argue that the liberal-conservative scale may not be the mechanism that all voters use. They argue that some voters organize their opinions along either a different single dimension that is not right to left or multiple dimensions in order to make rational decisions**.**

Even though the least constrained voters do not seem to organize their beliefs ideologically, some scholars argue that these voters can still cast meaningful votes. These researchers demonstrate that some positions are more important to voters than others and that these issues positions are not necessarily organized along the liberal-conservative dimension (Byrne, London, and Griffitt 1968; Clore and Baldridge 1968; Krosnick and Schuman 1988). Also, some voters seem to vote on single issues (Jones and Jones 1971). Single issue voters may not understand dimensions as complex as the liberal-conservative scale, but they do vote according to their positions on issues that are salient to them. If this is the case, then it is possible that certain clusters of issues matter most to voters while others matter very little. Such voters may also use information shortcuts (Bartels 1996; Rahn 1993) to cast votes that align with their issues preferences. If they understand candidate stances on issues that are important to them, then their vote choice may be rational without being structured ideologically. Cognitive shortcuts allow voters to make rational decisions (McDermott 1997) without being heavily tuned into

politics. However, if voters are making rational decisions, there should some connection between the issues that matter to them and their partisanship or their vote, even if they do not organize their views ideologically.

Tracking the least complex group, who represent twenty-five percent of the electorate, can provide additional insights into the debate about how this group differs from the other groups in the electorate and how they have changed over time. Zaller (1992) suggested that because the least constrained group does not have an ideological lens to organize their beliefs, that additional information may not be valuable for these voters as they have no consistent way in which to organize that information. These voters represent the least educated and least involved in politics, who vote at low rates, and we can expect that they simply use their party identification to structure their vote.

By tracking the two groups that are moderately involved in politics, who represent fifty percent of the electorate, it is possible to determine the effect of specific elections on these two groups. First, tracking these groups over time will help determine if there are candidates or election cycles where they structure their vote ideologically, along a single powerful dimension that is not ideological, based on groupings of issues, or without any noticeable structure outside of party identification. We should expect these voters to organize their beliefs beyond simply party identification, as they are somewhat involved in politics, but not to the degree of their more involved counterparts. For example cognitive (McDermott 1997) and information shortcuts (Bartels 1996; Rahn 1993) should allow these voters to pickup on cues in a given election and make some sense of incoming political information. Since some issues are more important to voters than others (Byrne, London, and Griffitt 1968; Clore and Baldridge 1968; Krosnick and

Schuman 1988), testing additional election cycles for these two groups of voters will allow me to test if they organize their beliefs around issues that are salient to them in specific elections. Plus, I will be able to test the degree to which the most politically complex have increased in their constraint over time in relation to their less complex peers in the electorate.

By tracking the most complex group, which represents twenty-five percent of the electorate, I am able to determine if this group has increased in their constraint. According to the RAS model (Zaller 1992), it should be expected that high complexity voters integrate additional information every election cycle that allows them to think more consistently about their positions on issue and the liberal-conservative dimension. Since this group tends to be highly educated and partisan, the additional information is filtered in partisan terms and integrated into their belief system. Plus, since party elites have become more constrained, or ideological, over time (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998, Jacobson 2000, 2002; Layman and Carsey 2002), it is reasonable to expect that there will be corresponding increases in issue alignment with partisanship in the most constrained twenty-five percent of the electorate. These factors should lead the most constrained in the electorate to organize their political beliefs with increasing consistency.

Testing constraint

Several hypotheses stem from my theory:

Hypothesis 1: The most politically constrained twenty-five percent of the electorate have been consistently connecting their partisanship and issue positions at much higher rates since 1976.

Hypothesis 2: The least politically constrained twenty-five percent of the electorate have not seen any consistent, election specific, or absolute increase between their partisanship and issue positions since 1976.

Hypothesis 3: The two medium politically constrained groups, which represent fifty percent of the electorate, connect their partisanship and issues at different rates from 1976 to 2004 depending on the election.

Exploring these three hypotheses may serve to explicate the relationship between political constraint and levels of conceptualization.

My independent and dependent variables are from the American National Election Studies for all presidential election years from 1976 to 2004. Party identification and ideological self-placement are two prominent independent variables that appear across all years. Each of my dependent variables also appears across all years: candidate evaluation scores, party evaluation scores, and vote choice. Party identification ranges from 0, strong Democrat, to 6, strong Republican. Independents, categorized and those who lean to one party are categorized into three groups: 2, leaning Democrat, 3, Independent, and 4, leaning Republican. Ideological self-placement ranges from 1, extremely liberal, to 7, extremely conservative. Candidate evaluation scores and party evaluation scores range from 0, not at all favorable, to 100, very favorable. The

two candidate and two party evaluations scores were transformed into a single number for each by taking the rating of the Democrats minus that of the Republican. Vote choice is a dichotomous indicator that represents the Republican and Democratic candidates; third party candidates were not included.

Most of my key independent variables, issues questions, were similar across all years, but some changed from year to year. These questions were ranked on a seven-point continuum that ranged from a very liberal position, 0, to a very conservative position, 7. For example, one question about a woman's position in society ranged from 0, men and women should have equal roles, to 7, a woman's place is in the home. There is an even cross section of election-specific issues and stable ideological issues. The main ideological questions that appeared in most of the 8 surveys include those about jobs, the position of women in society, the tradeoff between government spending and services, amount of defense spending, position of blacks in society, government health insurance, and abortion. Other questions that were election specific included those about legalizing marijuana, crime control, policies towards Russia and Central America, privatization of social security, and those on taxes. Whereas only half of the issues questions appeared in a majority of the surveys, the underlying ideological yardstick used to test the level of constraint in the electorate will apply to election-specific issues as well as those that are ideological abstract in nature. Appendix Table 2 presents all of the issues used for all years.

Issue questions were transformed in several ways in order to test the multidimensional belief structure argument. While most questions were on a seven-point scale some issues such as abortion, on a four-point scale, were normalized to a seven-

point scale to match up with other issue questions. If a respondent did not answer two or fewer issue questions, the mean of the position on all other issues was inserted for the missing values to avoid sample size problems. Once some of these variables were standardized, some were inverted to ensure all ran from liberal to conservative. Factor analysis, which will be discussed later, was used to determine the number of issue dimensions for each group. Once each issue could be placed on one factor, the mean of all the issues on that factor was taken and used in the regression to represent the average liberal-conservative score on each set of issues. For the high complexity group, the mean of the issues on the first factor encompassed almost all issues, as it was representative of the liberal-conservative dimension. For the least complex, there were more issue mean scores that were spread evenly across multiple factors, in line with a multidimensional belief system.

Partisanship and issues are compared against three dependant variables that capture the way that the electorate structures its beliefs. The first is vote choice, which varies only from the Democrat to the Republican candidate. The second, feeling thermometer scores for the parties, and third, feeling thermometer scores for the candidates, are both differential scores. These scores were calculated by taking the respondent's score for the Republican candidate or party and subtracting it from the score for the Democratic candidate or party. Taking a single differential score for each indicator is the preferred approach as my hypotheses and theory relate to increases in partisanship and its connection with issues and do not relate specifically to the effects on Democrats or Republicans.

Each sample is divided into four even categories in an attempt to capture political sophistication in order to compare each of these groups against one another. These groups are based on Stimson's (1975) measure that evenly combines political knowledge and education. Consistent with the Converse (1964) school of thought, this measure is an equally weighted combination of political knowledge questions, such as name recognition of prominent political figures, and levels of education, from primary school to an advanced degree.

Dividing the sample into these groups did present several problems over time. Since my sample was divided into four categories, requiring further divisions at times, possible representation problems may occur. Since political knowledge questions were not available in 1976 and 1980, education alone was used as an indicator of political sophistication in those years. While the relationship between political knowledge and education has been questioned (Bennett, Oldendick, Tuchfarber, and Bishop 1979), others suggest that the two are correlated (Nie, Verba, and Petrocik 1979); appendix table 2 presents this correlation for the years where both education and political knowledge questions were available. Despite the relatively low correlations presented, there is a theoretical reason to believe that those with higher levels of education are also high complexity voters.

In order to test the implications of the multidimensional belief theory, factor analysis was performed on all of the issue variables for each year. A single heavily loaded first factor is a strong indicator of a unidimensional belief structure in which voters align their issues along an abstract continuum. More than one or two factors would support the concept of a multidimensional belief structure, as it would capture the

multiple ways in which voters think about issues. Voters with lower levels of complexity may structure their beliefs in terms of a handful of key issues and not organize their beliefs ideologically. To capture these dimensions, factor analysis organized issues into categories that represented the belief dimensions of each group of voters. The mean of all issues on each factor was taken to represent the belief score on those issues. As an example, if a voter had four different factors that encompassed all issues and the issues on the first factor included the position of women in society, which the voter placed himself as a four on, and position of blacks in society, which the voter placed himself as a two on, the score for that factor would be the average of the two scores, or a three.

The linear probability model was used to assess the degree to which these four groups have become constrained in their issue beliefs over time. Partisanship has consistently been the best predictor of the vote and one of the best measures to understand how members of the electorate structure their beliefs. In order to determine how the electorate thinks about issues, partisanship is an important control variable, as it may encompass issue beliefs. Several models, performed on each of the four cognitive complexity groups, were used to determine both the connection between issues and partisanship and to determine how the electorate structures its beliefs:

Table 2: Explanation of models performed on each of the four cognitive complexity groups

DV & Model #	IVs	Sample	Summary
Vote choice #1	Lib-con scale	All voters	These three models are performed to demonstrate that strong partisans are more consistent than Independents in their vote choice
Vote choice #2	Lib-con scale	Independent identifiers	
Vote choice #3	Lib-con scale	Strong party identifiers	
Vote choice #4	Party ID	All voters	These nine models were used to perform variance decomposition (see Table 3). The adjusted r^2s were subtracted out to determine the unique effect of issues, unique effect of party identification, and the correlated component. The purpose of these models was to determine to what extent voters in each of the cognitive complexity groups were relying on their issue beliefs alone, their partisanship alone, or both their partisanship and issue positions when voting, evaluating candidates, and evaluating parties.
Vote choice #5	Mean issue score on each factor	All voters	
Vote choice #6	Party ID & Mean issue score on each factor	All voters	
Candidate differential score #1	Party ID	All voters	
Candidate differential score #2	Mean issue score on each factor	All voters	
Candidate differential score #3	Party ID & Mean issue score on each factor	All voters	
Party differential score #1	Party ID	All voters	
Party differential score #2	Mean issue score on each factor	All voters	
Party differential score #2	Party ID & Mean issue score on each factor	All voters	

These models help explain to what extent each segment of the electorate has become more ideological, more partisan, and how their stances on issues relate to the way they think about politics.

Variance decomposition was used to filter out the unique effect of issues and partisanship from the correlated component. I performed this technique by running three models for each group on each of three dependent variables: vote choice, candidate evaluation differential score, and party evaluation differential score. The first model in the set plotted the mean issue dimension score on each factor against the dependent variable. The second model in the set plotted partisanship against the dependent variable. The third model in the set plotted partisanship and the mean issue dimension score on each factor against the dependent variable. The unique effect of issues and partisanship

and the correlated component were then calculated. Table 3 presents a sample scenario, with a sample adjusted r^2 for calculating the unique effects of issues and partisanship. In order to generate the unique effect of party identification, the adjusted r^2 of the issues only model was subtracted from the full model (.61 - .42 = .19). To generate the unique effect of issues, the adjusted r^2 of the party identification model was subtracted from the full model (.61 - .54 = .07). The correlated component was the remaining variance not explained by the unique effect of party identification or issues (.61 - .19 - .07 = .35). This technique should provide a comprehensive means for analyzing the connection and individual importance of issues and partisanship.

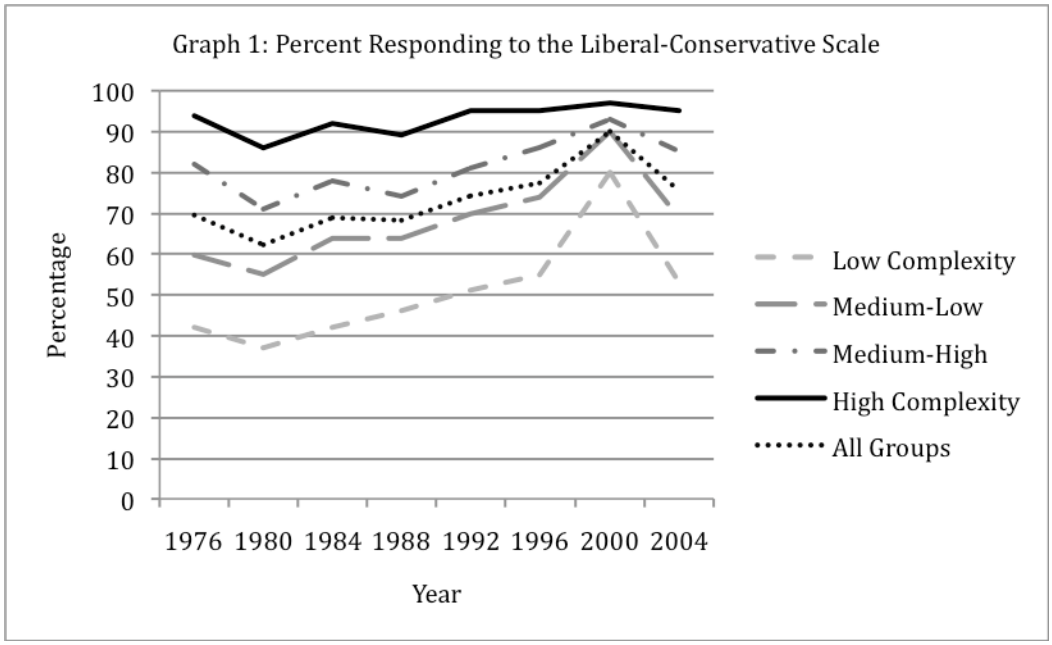
Table 3: Example using variance decomposition to calculate unique effects

	Issues on the vote	Party ID on the vote	Party ID and issues on the vote	Unique effect of Party ID	Unique effect of Issues	Correlated component
Adjusted r^2	.42	.54	.61	.19	.07	.35

Demonstrating constraint

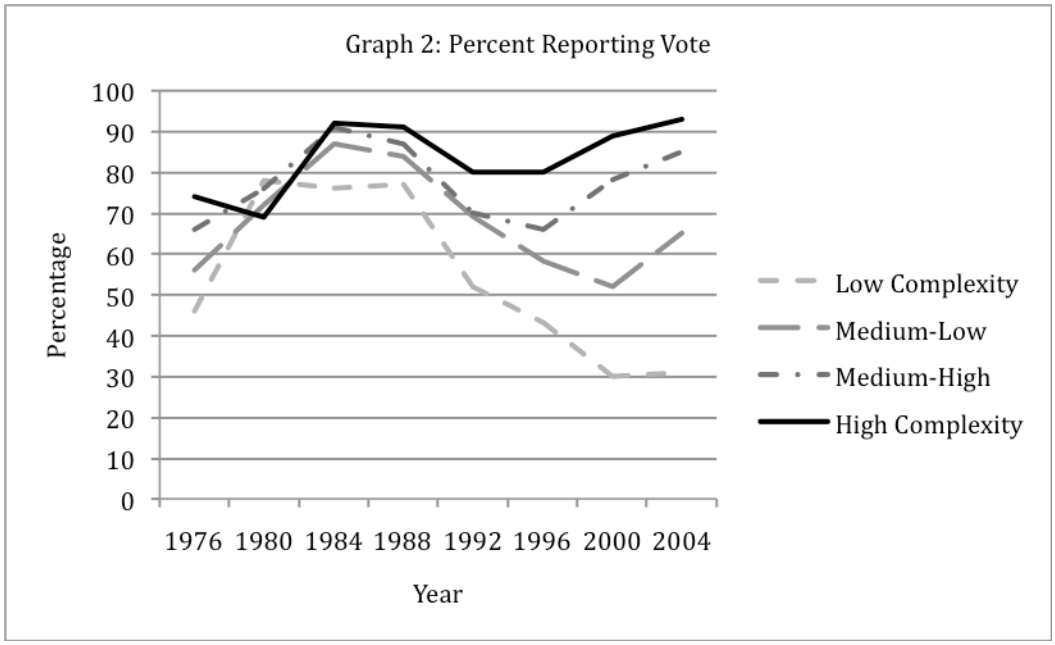
Ideology is an abstract scale that most voters do not use or understand (Converse 1964; Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960; Bennett 1988; Zaller 1992; Luskin 1987; Krosnick 1990). However, it is valuable to test if this perception has changed since 1972 in order to understand if voters have shifted in their ideological identification. Although the high complexity group has always thought of themselves in ideological terms, Graph 1 shows that all three of the other groups are identifying as ideologues at higher rates. While there are still significant differences between the groups, the increase in ideological self-identification can have several implications. It may mean that this scale is becoming more meaningful, especially for the least constrained voters. It may also mean that some voters have associated themselves with a liberal or conservative

label without understanding its meaning. The possibility that the increase in ideological self-identification is connected with other political phenomena must be explored. It's important to note that Graph 1 may provide evidence to contradict my hypotheses. If all groups have consistently, and increasingly, placed themselves on the ideological scale, they may also all think about politics in ideological terms. In either case, testing the implications of this increase in ideological perception has for the vote is important, as it is the simplest act of engagement in politics.

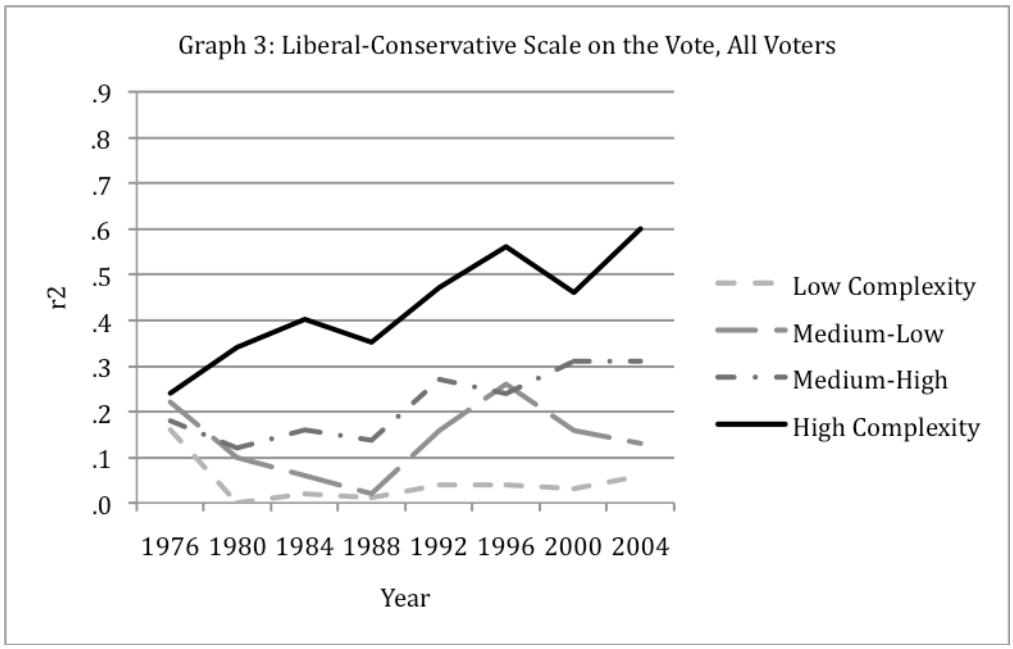


If there has been an increase in ideological self-identification, an increase in voting percentage among the groups is reasonable to expect. An increase in ideological thinking might correspond with an increase in political engagement. However, this increase does not seem to be connected to an increase in voting. In fact, the results presented in Graph 2 show that low complexity voters are voting in much fewer numbers than they were in 1976. Conversely, the high complexity group votes in higher proportions in 2004 than they did in 1976. This graph supports the idea that the high

complexity group has seen the most consistent increase in voting from one election to the next. While the high complexity group has seen slight drops in voting in some elections, these changes are magnified in the other three groups with lower levels of complexity. This graph supports the idea that turnout does change in certain elections for the half of the electorate with medium levels of complexity. Additionally, the least complex in the electorate seem have consistently voters in fewer numbers, suggesting that their participation in terms of voting has precipitously and continually declined since 1976. Despite the decreases in voting for the low complexity voters, their ideology may have become a much more powerful predictor of the vote. If the least educated and least politically knowledgeable, or those in the low complexity group, were to become more ideological despite their drop off in voting, this trend should be seen when the liberal-conservative scale is used to predict the vote.

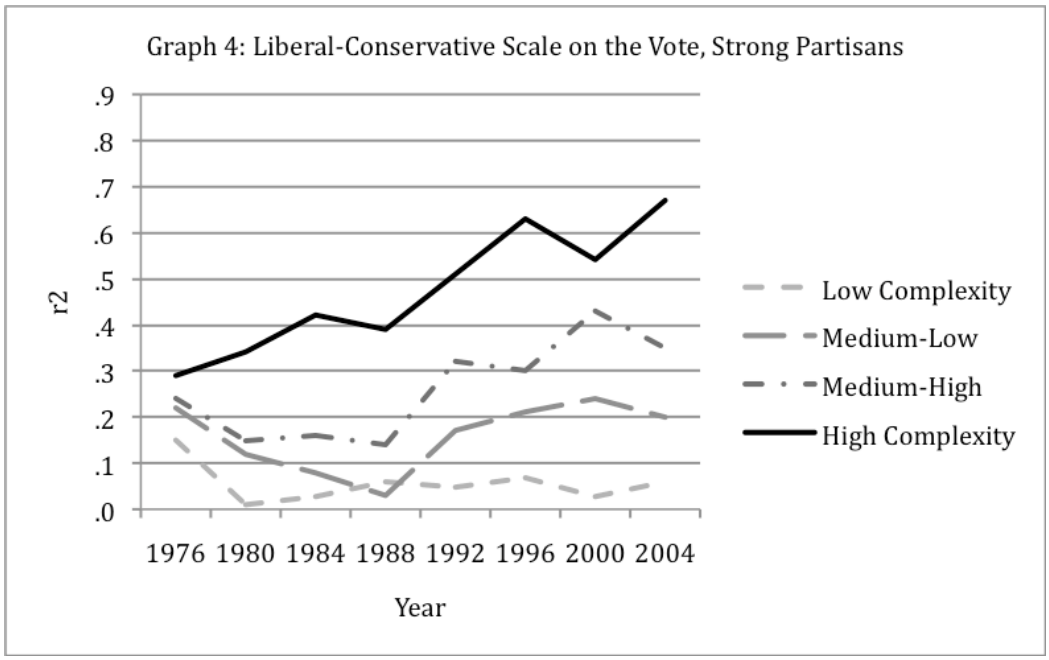


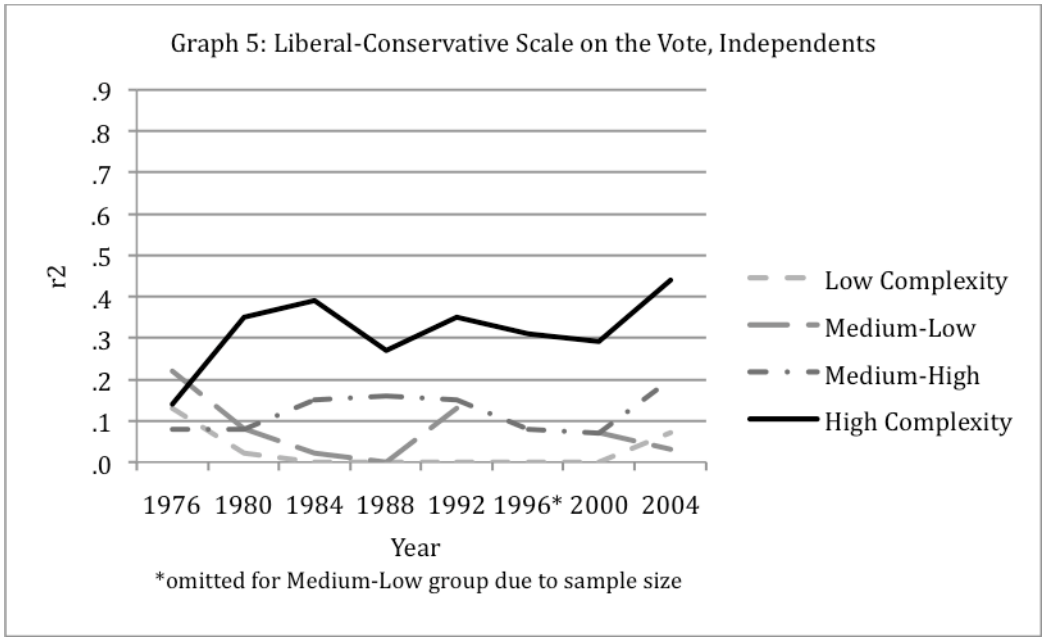
The results in Graph 3 demonstrate that despite the increase in ideological perceptions across the electorate, there seems to be a consistent and weak link between ideology and voting patterns for most of the electorate. Furthermore, Graph 3 shows that only the high complexity group link their ideological position to the Republican or Democratic candidate in terms of the vote. The low complexity group complexity group shows little variation over time. The two groups with medium levels of complexity seem to perceive some connection between the liberal-conservative scale and the vote, but only in specific elections. Only high complexity group shows a significant increase and votes at twice the consistency in 2004 as they did in 1976. High complexity voters seem to drop off slightly in some elections, but a trend is evident. While the medium-high group is voting their ideology slightly more consistently in 2004 than in 1976, the high complexity group is voting their ideology at three times their 1976 rate. With the exception of the most complex group, most voters are not voting in accordance with their ideology, and those that are seem to be influenced by specific elections. Stimson (1975) divides his groups further to determine if those who are strong partisan identifiers are more consistent in their voting patterns than those who do not strongly associate with the Democrats or Republicans.



If there is a relationship between the liberal-conservative scale and the vote, it should become clear among strong partisans. Strong partisans are more predicable in terms of their vote choice than Independents (Keith, Magleby, Nelson, Orr, Westlye, and Wolfinger 1992; Keith, Magleby, Nelson, Orr, Westlye, and Wolfinger 1986). Constituents of these groups were divided into those who classify themselves as strong partisans and those who classify themselves as Independents. Further division of these groups did present some sample size problems, (especially for Independents in 1996 as this number was omitted from the graph), but most of the sample sizes provided reliable estimates. Even though Independents are much less consistent in their voting patterns than strong partisans, the relationship in the high complexity group still presents a positive trend. In terms of strong partisans and Independents, the most complex in the electorate have made strides that are not evident in the other three less complex groups. Conversely, both Graphs 4 and 5 demonstrate that there is no strong, clear, or consistent trend for the least constrained in the electorate. It is clear that ideology has become a

powerful predictor only for high complexity voters and that these voters are less swayed by single election effects.





Ideology and Issues

Before further analysis can be contemplated, the implications of the findings thus far merit discussion. First, despite increases in ideological identification, the liberal-conservative scale seems to be a nearly meaningless dimension for at least half of the electorate, and arguably meaningless for a full seventy-five percent of the electorate. Second, while increases in responses to this scale did provide more reliable estimates, only fifty to sixty percent of the two least complex groups placed themselves on the ideological scale. On the other hand, the trend for the most complex group has demonstrated that the liberal-conservative dimension is a meaningful, and increasingly powerful, predictor of the vote. This result suggests that while some voters have no conception of this dimension, the most complex group is voting their ideology more consistently.

However, the debate on belief systems suggests that the least cognitively complex groups do not organize their belief system around the liberal-conservative scale**.** Some scholars argue that despite this lack of understanding of the liberal-conservative scale the least politically complex can still make meaningful political evaluations. These scholars argue that the least cognitively complex in the electorate organize their issue beliefs on multiple dimensions and that their vote is still a meaningful expression of this multidimensional belief structure. The multidimensional theory, which states that some voters can have multiple sets of beliefs not organized ideologically, can be examined by testing the degree to which various issues are related to one another.

Multidimensional beliefs and factor analysis

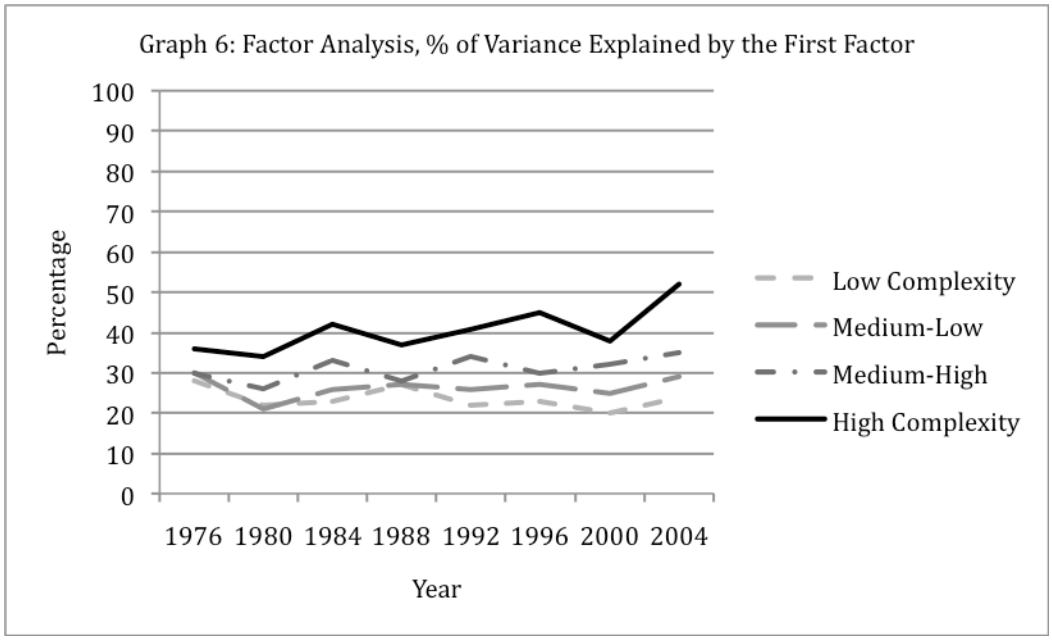
The multidimensional belief theory suggests that the liberal-conservative dimension is not important for all voters and that some organize their beliefs on issues in various policy clusters such as an economic or social dimension. Stimson performs factor analysis on each of his groups to test three arguments of the rationalists that he outlines (Stimson 1975):

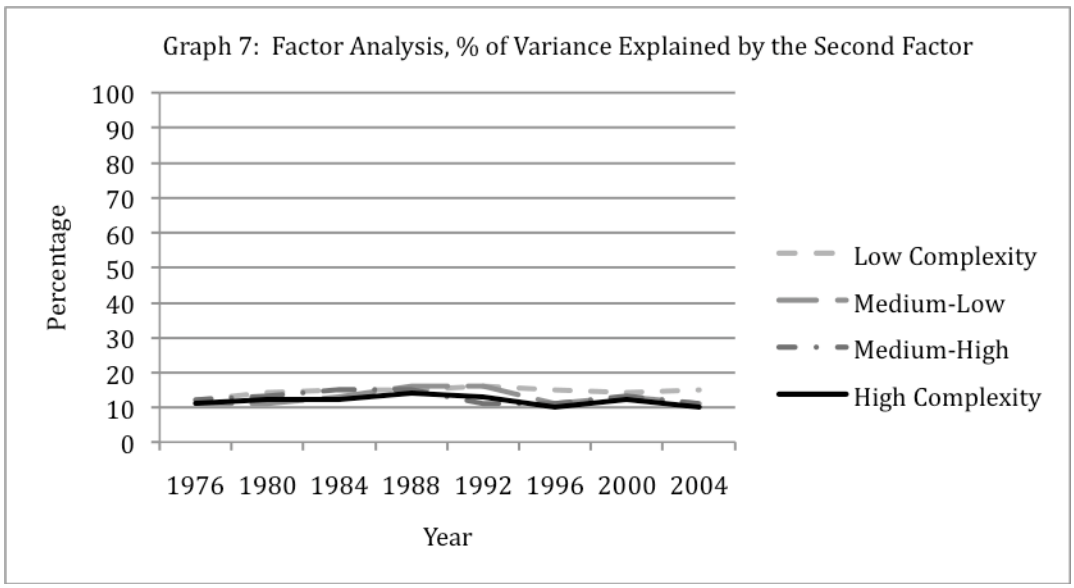
1) […] people at all ability levels employ the liberal-conservative continuum, although they may not articulate it.
2) […] people at all ability levels use a single abstract dimension, but it may not be the liberal-conservative dimension.
3) […] the number of dimensions used increases with cognitive ability.

The results presented in Table 4 demonstrate that as cognitive ability increases, the number of dimensions decreases. Substantively, the high complexity group thinks about issues primarily along one dimension and the low complexity group thinks about issues along multiple dimensions. In contrast to all three of the rationalists' hypotheses, the lower ability groups do not think about issues unidimensionally. Instead, they structure their beliefs multidimensionally. Conversely, this table also demonstrates that those in the high complexity group consistently think about issues along a single liberal-conservative dimension. Graph 6 contains a plot of the variance explained by the first dimension and shows that its explanatory power has remained relatively stable for most groups. The first dimension for the most cognitively complex encompasses the liberal-conservative scale on all occasions, although this result is not always true for the other three groups.

Graph 6 further illustrates that the most politically constrained group members think about issues in a slightly more consistent way than they did in 1976.

Table 4: Factor Analysis, Number of Factors								
Groups	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004
low complexity	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4
medium-low	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4
medium-high	2	3	2	2	2	4	3	3
high complexity	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2



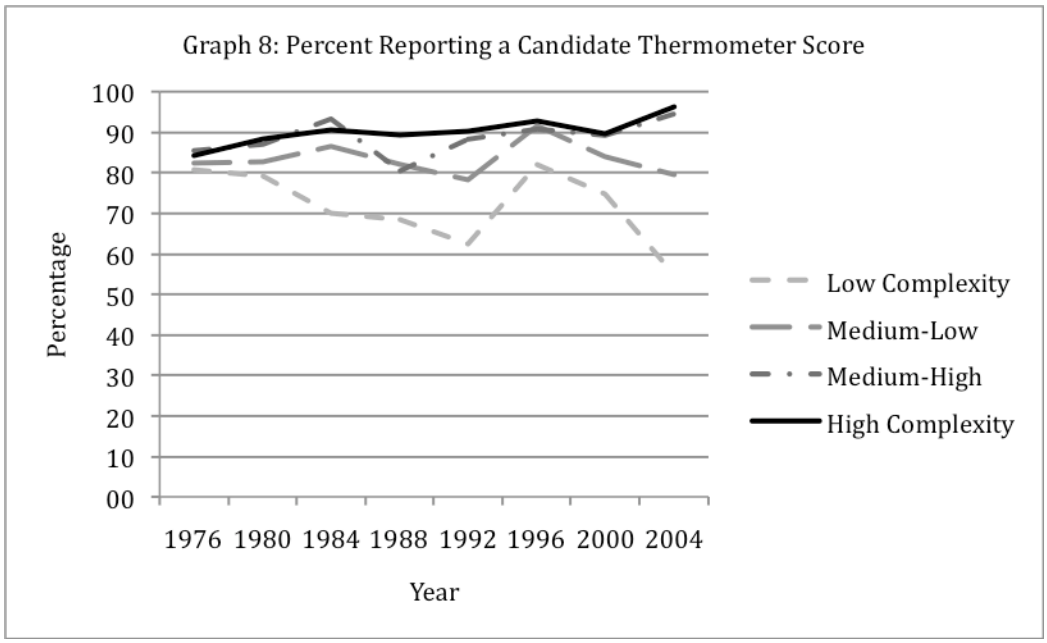


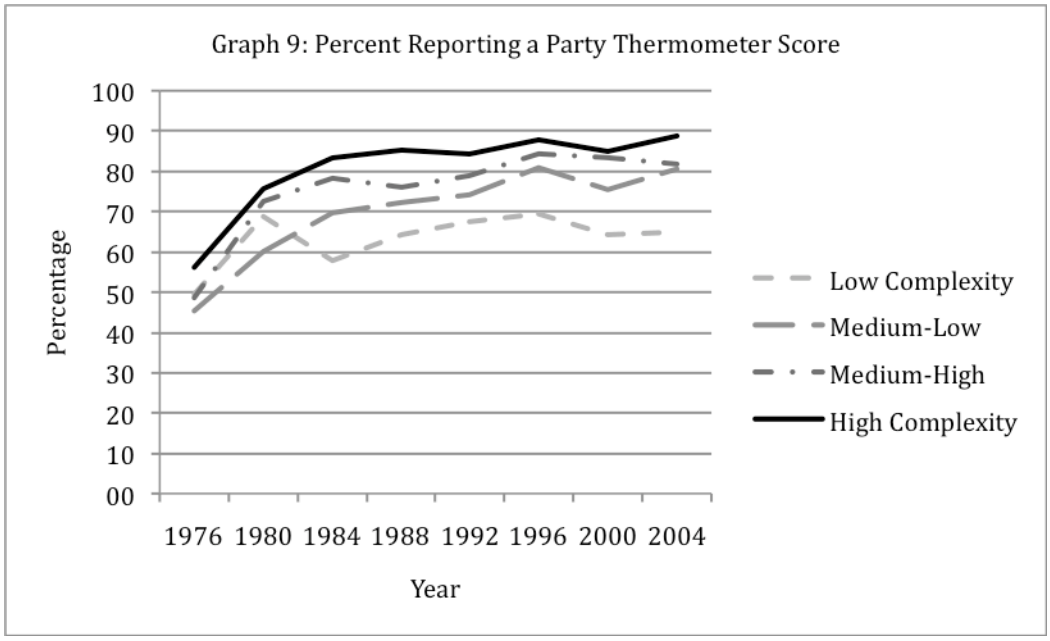
However, the multidimensional belief theory (Marcus, Tabb, and Sullivan 1974) suggests that multiple sets of issues are used to structure beliefs, instead of one set of issues organized by an underlying continuum. Graph 7 shows the variance explained on the second factor. The results presented in this graph contain little support for the multidimensional belief theory. Those that do not use a single first dimension also do not seem to use a second powerful dimension with which to organize their beliefs. Similar results exist for dimensions three and four, but were omitted, as the two higher complexity groups often did not have third and forth dimensions. Together, these results presented in Graphs 6 and 7 show that issues are not highly correlated with one another and the most educated and politically knowledgeable think about issues more consistently than others. Whereas these results seem to question all three of the rationalist propositions, further evidence of the meaning of these dimensions can be contrasted against party identification.

Partisanship and Issues

Partisanship has consistently been the best predictor of the vote throughout the study of voting behavior. Since party identification does not require a high level of abstraction to understand (Jacoby 1988), this measure is an important variable to determine the role of issues. From 1976 to 2004 nearly every respondent identified as a Democrat, an Independent, or a Republican. The range in reporting a party identification for the length of the study for all groups was 94-100 percent with the mean being 98 percent. These high levels of identification indicate that voters, above all else, think of themselves in primarily partisan terms. Given that partisanship is a potent identifier, discovering what impact issues and partisanship have together is important.

The three dependent variables that are used to test the connection between issues and party identification are vote choice, a candidate evaluation differential score, and a party evaluation differential score. As presented earlier, there are large differences between the groups in terms of the number of those reporting the vote. Voting may be a simple political act but it requires effort. The increasing differences between the groups may signal that the vote is not the best measure to evaluate how each group structures its beliefs; these results are reported earlier in Graph 2. Graph 8 shows the percentage of those reporting a candidate evaluation score and Graph 9 shows the percentage of those reporting a party evaluation score. These two scores are particularly valuable in analyzing the differences between the most complex group and the other three groups, because the least complex groups report evaluation scores for parties and candidates at nearly twice the percentage that they vote. While there has been an average of a 20% increase for all groups in reporting a party evaluation thermometer score, there has also been a 30% drop off from 1976 to 2004 for the least constrained in reporting a candidate thermometer score. While this drop off in reporting a candidate thermometer score may have implications for analyzing the low complexity group in modern elections, it should be augmented by the 20% increase in reported party thermometer score. Plus, since the differential scores for both indicators ranges from -100 to 100, the variation on the dependent variable should provide more robust estimates than simply relying on the vote as a dependent variable. Given the smaller differences between those reporting scores, in comparison to the vote, for all four groups on both of these measures, they should be powerful additional tests.





Voting is one of the most basic political acts one can perform to demonstrate civic engagement. As previously demonstrated in Graph 2**,** there has been an increasing vote gap between the low complexity and high complexity groups. Several models were run in order to explore the implications that this voting gap has for perceptions of issues and partisanship. As discussed in the methods section, variance decomposition is used to

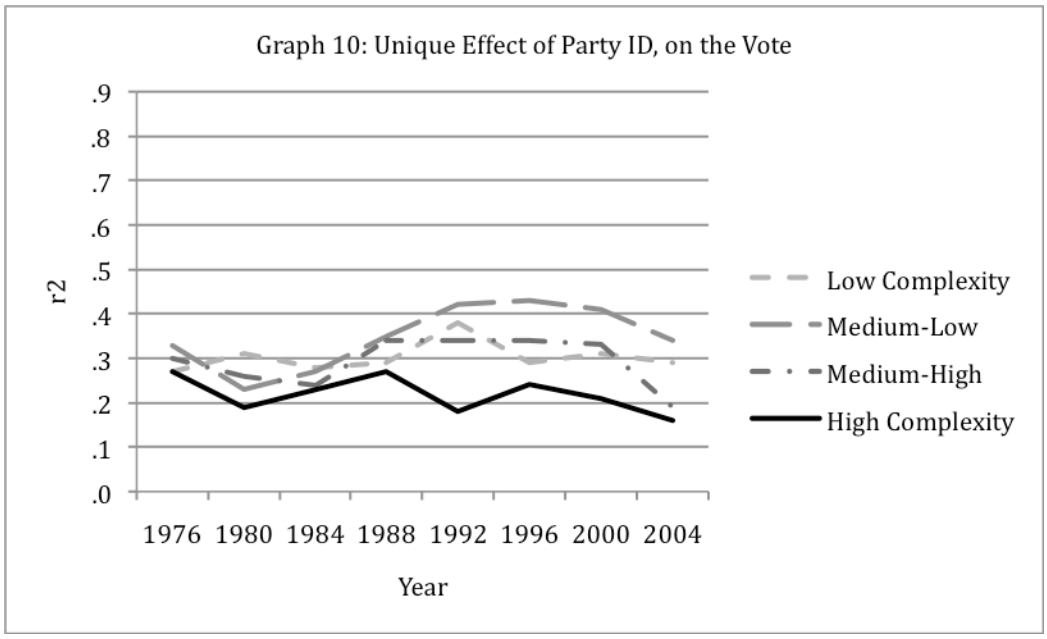
determine the unique effect of party identification, issue positions, and the correlated component. Table 5 reports central tendency measures for the unique effect of issues for all years on all three indicators: vote choice, the party thermometer differential score, and the candidate thermometer differential score. This table illustrates that issues by themselves have never had an independent effect on the electorate. The weak unique effect of issues requires further inquiry.

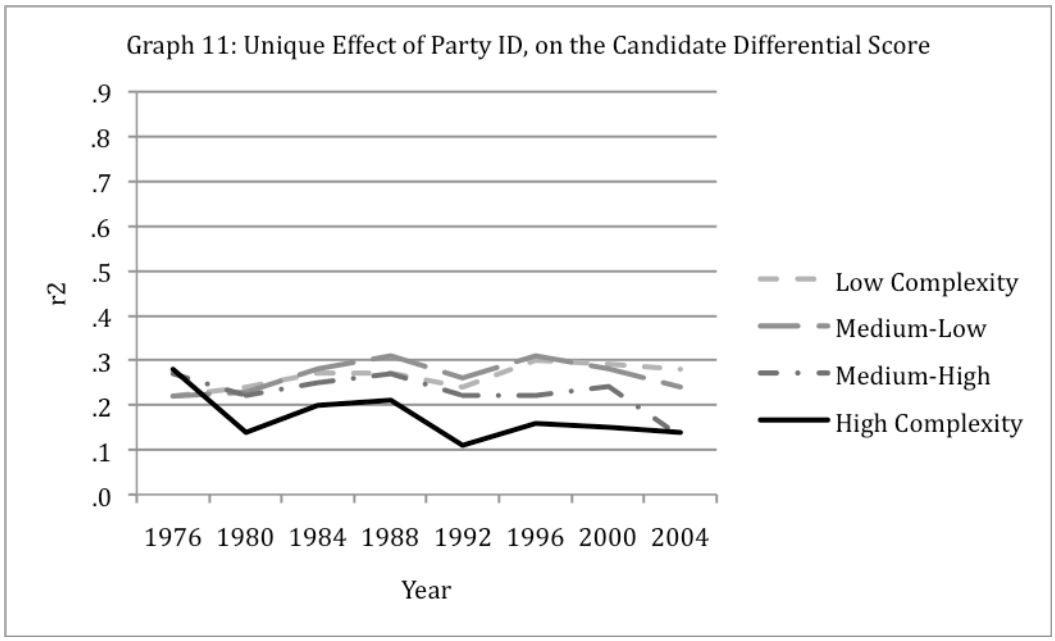
Table 5: Central tendency measures for the unique effect of issues*

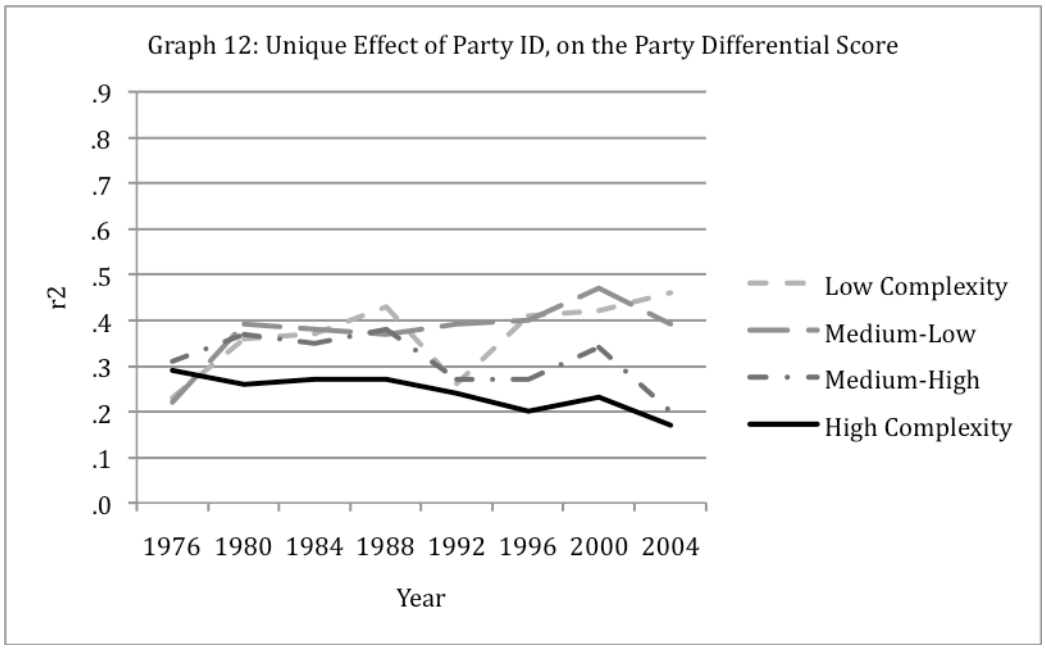
	Mean	Median	Mode
Vote	.03	.02	.01
Party Thermometer Score	.04	.03	.00
Candidate Thermometer Score	.05	.05	.05

*differential r^2 reported

If issues still do not matter to each of these groups, then it is important to understand the independent effect of party identification for these voters. Graph 10, Graph 11, and Graph 12 report the unique effect of party identification on the vote, candidate differential score, and party differential score. These graphs seem to contradict what is known about the high complexity group, that they are stronger partisans than the least complex groups. However, these graphs show the independent effect of party identification and show that lower complexity groups in electorate simply use their partisanship to inform their vote. While there are not large differences between the groups, there is a noticeable difference between the least complex and most complex in the electorate. Also, the most complex group seems to be relying less on simply party identification in 2004 than in 1976. Since it has been shown that the independent effect of issues is consistently low for all groups, it is valuable to see if the difference between the groups can be explained by the connection between partisanship and issues.

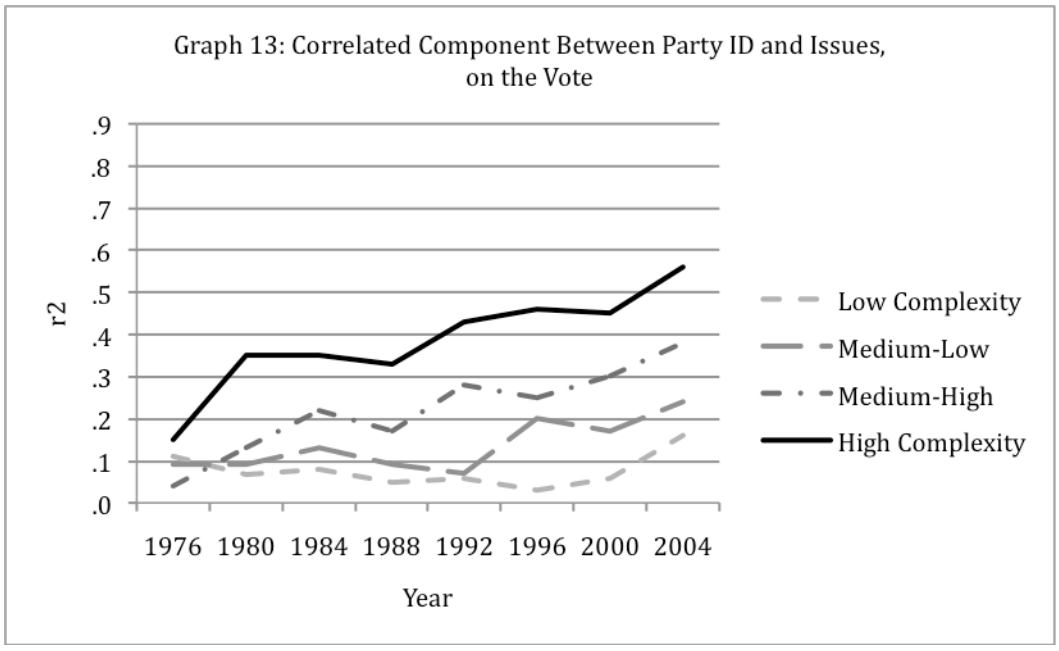

Graph 10: Unique Effect of Party ID, on the Vote
.9
.8
.7
.6
.5
.4
.3
.2
.1
.0
r2
1976 1980 1984 1988 1992 1996 2000 2004
Year
Low Complexity
Medium-Low
Medium-High
High Complexity

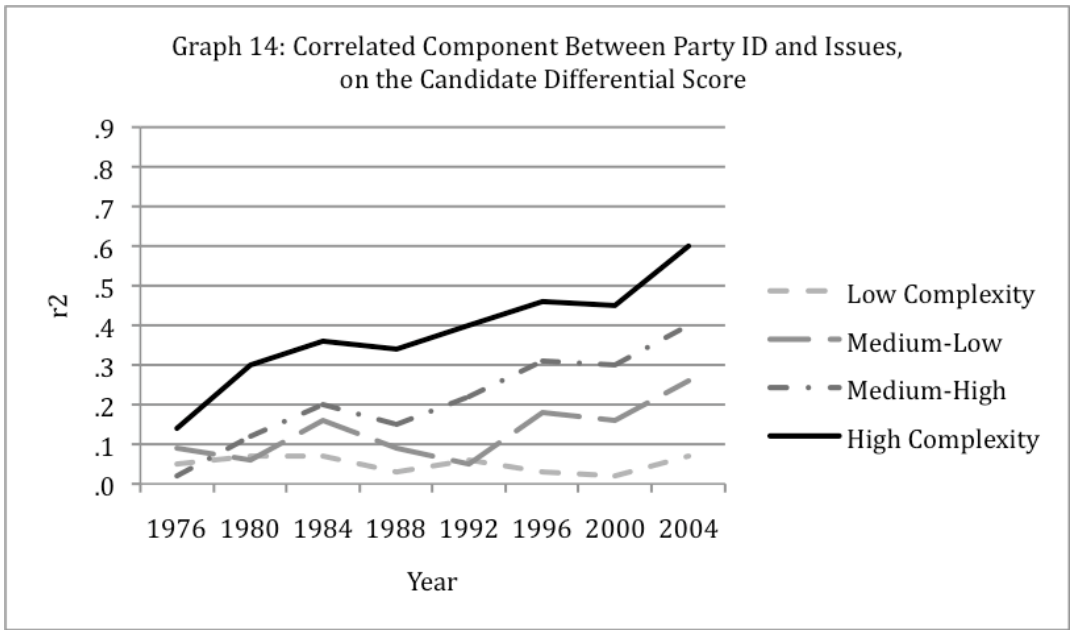

Graph 11: Unique Effect of Party ID, on the Candidate Differential Score
.9
.8
.7
.6
.5
.4
.3
.2
.1
.0
r2
1976 1980 1984 1988 1992 1996 2000 2004
Year
Low Complexity
Medium-Low
Medium-High
High Complexity

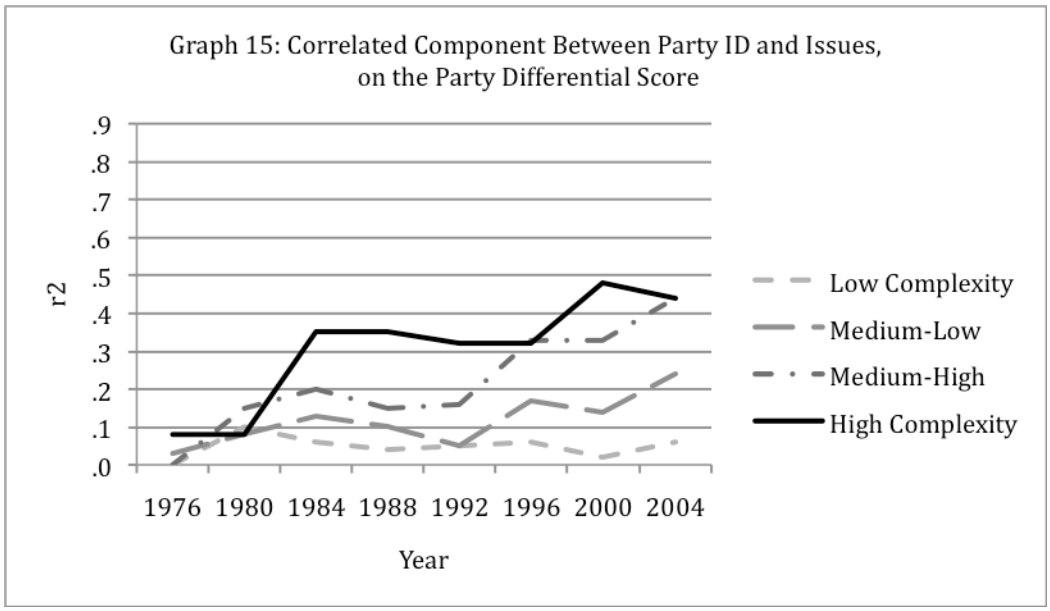


The connection between issues and partisanship has dramatically increased since 1976 for the most complex group when voting, evaluating parties, and evaluating candidates. Graphs 13 through 15 show the relationship that issues and partisanship have had on vote choice, candidate thermometer differential score, and party differential score. These data show that the most complex group has made tremendous leaps in connecting their partisanship and issues. The two medium complexity groups have made modest strides in connecting their issues and partisanship, but this connection seems to fluctuate in particular elections. The least complex group seems to perceive little relationship between their issues and partisanship. While party identification alone seems to be slightly more important for the least complex groups, it is clear that party identification and issues together are more meaningful for the most complex group. Issue positions and partisanship have not only become more connected with one another, but also their connection seems to support most of my hypotheses. This evidence demonstrates that while only the most complex voters have started to organize their partisanship and issue

beliefs, at least an addition fifty percent of the electorate seem to perceive this connection depending on the election.







Consequences for the electorate

Voters with high levels of education and high levels of political knowledge are more likely to connect issues with partisanship and be consistent in their partisanship associations with various indicators. Conversely, those with little education and little political knowledge consistently do not organize their beliefs ideologically or based on issues. The middle two complexity groups seem to grasp ideology and the connection between their partisanship and issues, but not consistently. These two groups, representing fifty percent of the electorate, do not exhibit a trend from 1976 to 2004, but seem to be affected by particular election campaigns.

For the most complex group, these results represent a trend that has consequences for how this group thinks about politics. While there is a slight decrease in the unique effect of partisanship for the most complex group, there is a much stronger connection between their partisanship and their issue positions. Statistically, it cannot be determined if ones party identification has changed to align with their issue beliefs or if voters are becoming more informed about how their party thinks of issues. Yet by considering

issues and partisanship together it is possibly to explain how the most complex group structures its beliefs. Theoretically, it is sensible to believe that the most complex voters are not only aligning their issue beliefs more consistently along a liberal-conservative dimension, but are also becoming better informed of their parties' stance on issues. This conclusion parallels both the noticeable independent effect of party identification beyond issues and the deficit of an effect of issues alone. Party identification, when accounting for issues, has decreased in its predictive ability for the most constrained group while the predictability of issues and partisanship together has increased. This suggests that there is something fundamentally different about the high complexity group that allows them to organize their political beliefs much better than their closest counterparts, the two medium complexity groups.

The medium two groups, who represent fifty percent of the electorate, do not exhibit a consistent change since 1976. While they have made some progress in some elections, unlike the lowest complexity group, they have not made consistent strides in connecting their partisanship and position on issues since 1976. There are some elections, such as 1984 and 2004, where these two groups see a clear connection between their ideology and their vote or their stance on issues and their partisanship. However, there are also some elections, such as 1988, where these groups see little connection between their partisanship and issues or their ideology and their vote. While this group has seen some increasing constraint in some elections, the least complex twenty-five percent of the electorate do not seem to be affected by any particular election.

The low complexity group has consistently relied on partisanship alone in

informing its vote, evaluating candidates, and evaluating parties. In addition, this group has demonstrated neither a stronger connection between their ideology and the vote nor have they demonstrated a stronger connection between their party identification and their stance on issues. While all groups existed at a low level of constraint in 1976, the lowest complexity group is the only section of the electorate to have made no progress, either consistent or in specific elections, in connecting their partisanship and stance on issues. It is possible that there is a bound on the lowest end on the complexity scale; there may be a minimum amount of education and political knowledge required to make sense of the political world.

Implications for future research

These results may speak to a larger trend that should have implications for further research. *The American Voter's* (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960) conclusions seem to apply to the electorate today. Mainly that only a small percentage of electorate has the tools to comprehend politics at the elite level. While the robust relationship between partisanship and issues is limited to the most complex group, my research shows that specific elections affect an additional fifty percent of voters. The large decrease in voting for the least politically complex groups may offset the benefits of increasing constraint in certain elections for these groups.

An increasing spread that develops among the groups has implications not only for their understanding of issues and partisanship, but implications for how elites address each segment of voters. Scholars should examine why the most complex in the electorate are becoming more constrained. It is possible that political elites are causing the most constrained group in the electorate to pay more attention to politics. The causal direction

could also runs the other way; the most constrained voters could be causing political elites to polarize. However, the explanation may be simpler than the implications outlined here. Table 5 reveals that the average number of correct answers on the political knowledge questions has increased since 1976. In addition, Table 6 presents an average education score for each electorate that ranges from 0, which indicates no education, to 1, which indicates the highest level of education. These measures demonstrate that the population is reporting higher levels of education and, on average, higher levels of political knowledge.

Table 6: Mean percentage of correct answers to political questions

	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004
Mean %	x	x	38	39	43	50	32	49

Table 7: Mean score on educational scale, ranging from 0-1

	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004
Mean score	.52	.56	.58	.51	.54	.59	.61	.61

Zaller (1992) noted that, "every opinion is a marriage of information and predisposition: information to form a mental picture of the given issue, and predisposition to motive some conclusion about it." Therefore, it may just be that the increasing connection between partisanship and issues is a simple reflection of the increase in education and voter information for the most politically constrained. These voters may be aligning their issues and partisanship simply because they are exposed to more information and because their increasing educational levels make them more likely to form a predisposition concomitant with other powerful political beliefs.

Additionally it is possibly that political polarization or the Southern realignment has caused this trend. Party polarization (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998; Layman and Carsey 2002; Jacobson 2000, 2003) could have jolted the most involved in the electorate to pay more attention to elite discourse. Also, the Southern realignment (Bartles, 2000) may have aided in the liberal conservative differentiation between the parties. In either case, the increasing gap between these groups has normative implications. The least complex groups simply have not been as responsive to the same stimuli as their more complex peers. Political scientists should further examine low complexity voters, as their decrease in voting and consistent lack of constraint may have larger implications for the way in which this group participates in the political discourse. In addition, scholars should examine specific elections to determine what stimuli caused those with medium levels of constraint to organize their beliefs more consistently in certain elections. Scholars should also examine the extent to which elite political polarization has extended into the electorate in order to identify if elites have been polarizing because of their most engaged constituents or if their polarization has caused their more engaged constituents to polarize. It may also be worth exploring why the least complex in the electorate do not seem to be at all responsive to an invigorated and heavily polarized political environment.

APPENDIX

Appendix Table 1: Issue Questions

Variable	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004	Total
jobs	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
women	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
gov't spending /services		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
defense spending		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
blacks		x		x	x	x	x	x	6
insurance	x			x	x	x	x	x	6
abortion	x	x	x	x	x				5
minorities	x		x	x					3
environment #1						x	x	x	3
crime						x	x		2
environment #2						x	x		2
urban unrest	x				x				2
Russia		x	x						2
bussing	x	x							2
accused	x								1
marijuana	x								1
Central America			x						1
inflation		x							1
taxes #1		x							1
diplomacy								x	1
social security								x	1
taxes #2	x								1

Appendix Table 2: Correlation between grade and political knowledge

1976	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004
		.35	.44	.42	.38	.39	.36

REFERENCES

Abramowitz, A. I., and K. L. Saunders. 1998. "Ideological Realignment in the US Electorate." *The Journal of Politics* 60 (3):634-52.

Achen, C. H. 1975. "Mass Political Attitudes and the Survey Response." *The American Political Science Review* 69 (4):1218-31.

———. 1983. "Toward Theories of Data: The State of Political Methodology." *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*:69–93.

Axelrod, Robert. 1976. *Structure of Decision: The Cognitive Maps of Political Elites*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press Princeton.

Bartels, L. M. 1996. "Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 40 (1):194-230.

Bennett, S. E., R. Oldendick, A. J. Tuchfarber, and G. F. Bishop. 1979. "Education and mass belief systems: An extension and some new questions." *Political Behavior* 1 (1):53-72.

Bennett, Stephen Earl. 1988. "" Know-Nothings" Revisited: The Meaning of Political Ignorance Today." *Social Science Quarterly* 69 (2):476-90.

Bishop, G. F., A. J. Tuchfarber, and R. W. Oldendick. 1978. "Change in the Structure of American Political Attitudes: The Nagging Question of Question Wording." *American Journal of Political Science* 22 (2):250-69.

Byrne, Donn, Oliver London, and William Griffitt. 1968. "The effect of topic importance and attitude similarity-dissimilarity on attraction in an intrastranger design." *Psychonomic Science* 11 (8):303-4.

Campbell, Angus, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes. 1960. "The American Voter." New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Clore, Gerald L., and Barbara Baldridge. 1968. "Interpersonal attraction: the role of agreement and topic interest." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 9 (4):340-6.

Converse, Philip. 1964. *The Nature of Belief Systems Among Mass Publics*. Edited by D. Apter. New York: The Free Press.

Dean, Gillian, and Thomas Moran. 1977. "Measuring Mass Political Attitudes: Change and Uncertainty." *Political Methodology* (4):383-401.

Erikson, R. S. 1979. "The SRC Panel Data and Mass Political Attitudes." *British Journal of Political Science* 9 (1):89-114.

Feldman, S. 1988. "Structure and Consistency in Public Opinion: the Role of Core Beliefs and Values." *American Journal of Political Science* 32 (2):416-40.

Hagner, Paul R., and John C. Pierce. 1983. "Levels of Conceptualization and Political Belief Consistency." Micropolitics.

Jacobson, Gary C. 2000. *Party Polarization in National Politics: The Electoral Connection*. Edited by J. R. Bond and R. Fleisher. Washington: Congressional Quarterly Press.

———. 2003. "Partisan Polarization in Presidential Support: The Electoral Connection." *Congress and the Presidency* 30 (1):1-36.

Jacoby, W. G. 1988. "The Impact of Party Identification on Issue Attitudes." *American Journal of Political Science* 32 (3):643-61.

Jones, R. S., and E. T. Jones. 1971. "Issue Saliency, Opinion-Holding, and Party Preference." *The Western Political Quarterly* 24 (3):501-9.

Judd, C. M., J. A. Krosnick, and M. A. Milburn. 1981. "Political Involvement and Attitude Structure in the General Public." *American Sociological Review* 46 (5):660-9.
Keith, B. E., D. B. Magleby, C. J. Nelson, E. Orr, M. C. Westlye, and R. E. Wolfinger. 1986. "The Partisan Affinities of Independent 'Leaners'." *British Journal of Political Science* 16 (2):155-85.
Keith, Bruce E., David B. Magleby, Candice J. Nelson, Elizabeth Orr, Mark C. Westlye, and Raymond E. Wolfinger. 1992. *The Myth of the Independent Voter*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Krosnick, Jon A. 1990. "Expertise and Political Psychology." *Social cognition* 8 (1):1-8.
Krosnick, Jon A., and Howard Schuman. 1988. "Attitude intensity, importance, and certainty and susceptibility to response effects." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 54 (6):940-52.
Layman, G. C., and T. M. Carsey. 2002. "Party Polarization and" Conflict Extension" in the American Electorate." *American Journal of Political Science* 46 (4):786-802.
Luskin, R. C. 1987. "Measuring Political Sophistication." *American Journal of Political Science* 31 (4):856-99.
Marcus, G. E., D. Tabb, and J. L. Sullivan. 1974. "The Application of Individual Differences Scaling to the Measurement of Political Ideologies." *American Journal of Political Science* 18 (2):405-20.
McDermott, M. L. 1997. "Voting Cues in Low-Information Elections: Candidate Gender as a Social Information Variable in Contemporary United States Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 41 (1):270-83.
Nie, N. H., S. Verba, and J. R. Petrocik. 1979. *The Changing American Voter*: Harvard University Press Cambridge, Mass.
Nie, Norman H., Sidney Verba, and John R. Petrocik. 1976. *The Changing American Voter*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
Rahn, W. M. 1993. "The Role of Partisan Stereotypes in Information Processing about Political Candidates." *American Journal of Political Science* 37 (2):472-96.
Stimson, J. A. 1975. "Belief Systems: Constraint, Complexity, and the 1972 Election." *American Journal of Political Science* 19 (3):393-417.
Zaller, John R. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press.