

**Constraint, Ideology, and Polarization in the American Electorate: Evidence from
the 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study**

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Abstract

This study uses data from the 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) to investigate ideological constraint and polarization in the American electorate. An analysis of responses to questions on a variety of national issues indicates a high level of ideological constraint among voters in 2006 with a much lower level of constraint among nonvoters. Voters' opinions on a wide range of issues appear to reflect their positions on a single underlying liberal-conservative ideological dimension. The distribution of voters on this liberal-conservative dimension is bimodal with Democratic voters concentrated on the left side of the distribution and Republican voters concentrated on the right side of the distribution. Party identification among voters is also strongly related to location on this liberal-conservative dimension. These results indicate that, to a considerable extent, electoral competition in the United States is now structured by ideology. The American public appears to be increasingly divided into two groups: the politically engaged, who view politics in ideological terms, and the politically disengaged, who do not.

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The extent of ideological thinking in the American electorate has been a subject of great interest to students of public opinion and voting behavior since the publication of Converse's seminal paper on "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics" (1964). Based on his analysis of data from the 1956 and 1960 American National Election Studies, Converse concluded that the sort of ideological thinking common among political elites was confined to a small minority of the American public. The vast majority of ordinary voters showed little evidence of using an ideological framework to evaluate political parties or presidential candidates and very limited understanding of basic ideological concepts such as liberalism and conservatism. Perhaps most tellingly, the opinions expressed by citizens on current policy issues were almost completely unrelated to each other. According to Converse, the absence of consistency, or constraint, in the opinions of ordinary voters proved that they were responding to these issues idiosyncratically, rather than based on an underlying liberal or conservative ideology. In fact, on some issues Converse concluded that a majority of respondents did not even have meaningful opinions.

Converse's findings concerning the absence of constraint and the prevalence of "nonattitudes" in public opinion on policy issues have sparked considerable debate among students of public opinion in the United States. Achen (1975) argued that Converse's results reflected the poor quality of the questions used to measure policy attitudes in the early NES surveys more than a lack of political sophistication on the part of ordinary Americans. In addition, several studies of public opinion during the late 1960s and early 1970s found that the level of ideological constraint was considerably greater than that observed by Converse (Nie and Anderson 1974; Stimson 1975; Nie and

Rabjohn 1979). However, other scholars concluded that much of this increase was due to changes in the questions used to measure issue positions in the NES survey (Bishop et al. 1978; Sullivan et al. 1979).

Whatever the effects of changes in the NES instrument, American politics and the American electorate have changed dramatically since the 1950s in ways that might lead one to expect an increase in the prevalence of ideological thinking in the public, as Converse himself has acknowledged (2006). One important change has been a very substantial increase in the educational attainment of the electorate. In his original study, Converse found that education was a strong predictor of ideological sophistication: college educated voters displayed much higher levels of ideological sophistication than grade school or high school educated voters. Between 1956 and 2004, the proportion of NES respondents with only a grade school education fell from 37 percent to 3 percent while the proportion with at least some college education rose from 19 percent to 61 percent. Based on this trend alone, one would expect a much larger proportion of today's voters to be capable of understanding and using ideological concepts.

Another development that might be expected to raise the level of ideological awareness among the public has been the growing intensity of ideological conflict among political elites in the United States. For several decades, Democratic office-holders, candidates, and activists have been moving to the left while Republican office-holders, candidates, and activists have been moving to the right. Conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans, who were common in American politics during the 1950s and 1960s, are now extremely rare. At the elite level, ideological differences between the parties are

probably greater now than at any time in the past half century (Rohde 1991; Poole and Rosenthal 1997; Poole and Rosenthal 2001; Stonecash et al. 2003).

There is widespread agreement among scholars concerning the growing importance of ideological divisions at the elite level in American politics. There is much less agreement, however, about the significance of these divisions at the mass level. Some studies have found evidence that growing elite polarization has led to an increase in ideological awareness and polarization among the public (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998; Hetherington, 2001; Layman and Carsey 2002). However, other scholars, most notably Morris Fiorina and his collaborators, have argued that when it comes to the political beliefs of the mass public, very little has changed since the 1950s.

In his popular and influential book, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, Fiorina (2006) claims that Converse's portrait of the American electorate "still holds up pretty well." According to Fiorina, the ideological disputes that engage political elites and activists have little resonance among the American mass public: like their mid-20th century counterparts, ordinary 21st century Americans "are not very well-informed about politics, do not hold many of their views very strongly, and are not ideological" (p. 19).

One problem with such sweeping generalizations about the political sophistication of ordinary Americans is that ordinary Americans are far from homogeneous when it comes to political interest, knowledge, and activity (Kinder 2006). Some Americans have little or no interest in politics while others care deeply about political issues. Some know very little about government and politics while others know a great deal. And some don't bother to vote while others not only vote but try to influence their friends' and neighbors' votes, contribute money to candidates, and work in political campaigns. This

diversity needs to be taken into account in any study of ideological sophistication in the public. As electoral competition in the United States has become increasingly structured by ideology, those citizens who lack a coherent ideological outlook may be increasingly alienated from the two major parties and from the electoral process itself. Thus, Fiorina's characterization of Americans as uninterested and non-ideological may apply very well to the large number of Americans who rarely or never vote. However, it may not apply as well to regular voters, and it is voters whose opinions are of greatest concern to candidates and elected officials.

Data: The Cooperative Congressional Election Study

This study uses data from the 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) to investigate ideological constraint and polarization in the American electorate. The CCES involved an Internet based survey of voting age Americans conducted by Polimetrix, Inc. on behalf of a consortium of scholars at 37 colleges and universities. Polimetrix uses a sample matching methodology to produce a sample that is representative of the overall U.S. electorate (Rivers n.d.). Registered voters were deliberately over-sampled in order to ensure adequate coverage of different types of House and Senate contests: the CCES surveyed over 36,000 eligible voters, including over 24,000 who reported voting in the 2006 midterm election.

[Table 1 goes here]

Table 1 compares the characteristics of voters in the CCES sample with the characteristics of voters in the 2006 National Exit Poll (NEP). On several of these characteristics, including race, gender, and income, the CCES sample was very similar to the NEP sample. Most importantly, the party division of the vote for the House of

Representatives in the CCES sample was identical to the party division of the vote in the NEP sample and matched the actual party division of the vote in the election. On some other characteristics, however, the CCES sample differed from the NEP sample.

Compared with the NEP sample, the CCES sample included a smaller proportion of respondents over the age of 60, a larger proportion of respondents with only a high school education, and a smaller proportion of college graduates. The CCES sample also included a somewhat larger proportion of self-identified independents than the NEP sample.

Unfortunately, the National Exit Poll did not include questions that would allow us to measure ideological constraint or polarization. However, none of the differences between the CCES sample and the NEP sample would lead us to expect CCES respondents to be more ideologically sophisticated or more polarized in their issue positions than NEP respondents. If anything, the smaller proportion of college graduates and the larger proportion of independents in the CCES sample would lead us to expect a lower level of ideological sophistication and a lower degree of ideological polarization among CCES respondents than among NEP respondents. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the CCES voter sample was reasonably representative of the actual midterm electorate in terms of ideological sophistication and polarization.

Ideology in the American Electorate

When asked about their political views, more Americans generally describe themselves as moderate or middle-of-the-road than as either liberal or conservative, and this was true of respondents in both the Cooperative Congressional Election Study and the 2006 National Exit Poll. With regard to ideological identification, the results of the

two surveys were very similar. In both surveys, the moderate category was the most popular and self-identified conservatives outnumbered self-identified liberals. In the 2006 NEP, 45 percent of respondents described themselves as moderate, 21 percent as liberal, and 34 percent as conservative. The results were slightly different in the CCES survey because the CCES gave respondents five categories to choose from instead of only three. However, the data displayed in Figure 1 show that far more CCES respondents placed themselves in the moderate category than in any other single category and that self-identified conservatives outnumbered self-identified liberals.

[Figure 1 goes here]

Based on their ideological self-identification, CCES respondents, like voters responding to the 2006 NEP, and like respondents in almost every other recent national opinion poll, appear to be a predominantly moderate group. Almost two-fifths of voters in the CCES survey placed themselves exactly in the center of the five-point liberal-conservative scale, while less than one-fifth placed themselves at either the left or right extremes. But liberal-conservative self-identification is only one measure of political ideology. The fact that the moderate label is very popular with American voters does not necessarily mean that the electorate is predominantly moderate, any more than the popularity of the independent label means that the electorate is predominantly independent. Political scientists have learned that many self-described independents turn out, on closer inspection, to have a clear partisan orientation (Keith et al. 1992). Similarly, many self-described moderates may turn out, on closer inspection to have a clear ideological orientation.

In order to measure the degree of ideological constraint and polarization in the American electorate, we analyzed the answers provided by CCES respondents to 11 questions dealing with current national issues as well as the ideological identification question. The 11 issues included in this analysis were abortion, partial birth abortion, stem cell research, social security privatization, the minimum wage, environmental protection vs. job protection, affirmative action, capital gains taxes, immigration, and two questions about the war in Iraq, one asking about whether the war had been a mistake and the other asking about withdrawal of U.S. troops.¹ These 11 issues cover a variety of policy domains—cultural and economic, as well as foreign and domestic. One question asking about the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) was dropped from the analysis because responses to this question did not correlate very highly with responses to any of the other issues in the survey. Two other issues, gay marriage and global climate change, were dropped because the questions about these issues were only asked of a sub-sample of respondents who were not, in other respects, representative of the entire sample.

[Table 2 goes here]

Table 2 displays the correlations (Pearson's r) among responses to the 12 items in the CCES for two groups of respondents: voters and nonvoters. All of the items are coded in a consistent direction, from the most liberal response to the most conservative response, so that a positive correlation indicates consistency. The results in Table 2 show that there was an impressive degree of constraint in the opinions of voters. The average correlation among their responses to these 12 questions was .47. In contrast, the opinions

¹ The wording of the questions included in the CCES survey can be found on the CCES website: http://web.mit.edu/polisci/portl/cces/material/CCES_Common_Content_August_15_2006_final.pdf.

of nonvoters demonstrated a much lower degree of constraint. The average correlation among their responses to the same 12 questions was only .20. Clearly, the opinions of voters on national issues were much more constrained than the opinions of nonvoters.

The correlations among the issue positions of voters in the 2006 CCES were not only much stronger than those of nonvoters; they were also much stronger than the correlations among the issue positions of either the public or the sample of congressional candidates analyzed by Converse (1964). When the opinions of the CCES voter sample on these 12 items were subjected to a principal component factor analysis, the first dimension extracted by the factor analysis had an Eigen value of 6.3 and explained 52 percent of the common variance and no other factor had an Eigen value of greater than 1.0. The average correlation between the 12 items and the first factor was a robust .72. Moreover, according to an internal consistency analysis, a simple additive scale based on these 12 items had a Cronbach's alpha of .90, well beyond what is generally considered necessary for a satisfactory scale.

These analyses indicate that there is an ideological structure to the opinions of voters that is very similar to the ideological structure of voting in Congress: the responses of voters to these 12 questions largely reflected their positions on a single underlying liberal-conservative dimension just as the votes of members of Congress largely reflect their positions on a single underlying liberal-conservative dimension (Poole and Rosenthal 1997).

Ideological Polarization in the Electorate

There is a very close relationship between constraint and polarization in public opinion: the larger the average correlation among the opinions in a group, the larger the

proportion of consistent liberals and consistent conservatives in that group. Thus, based on the correlations in Table 2, we would expect the opinions of voters to be much more polarized than the opinions of nonvoters and this difference is clearly evident in Figure 2 which compares the distributions of voters and nonvoters on the 12-item liberal-conservative scale.

[Figure 2 goes here]

There is a striking difference between the two distributions. The opinions of voters follow a bimodal distribution whereas the opinions of nonvoters follow a unimodal distribution. Only 17 percent of voters fall in the center (between 40 percent conservative and 60 percent conservative) of the distribution while 39 percent of voters fall at either the left (less than 20 percent conservative) or right (80 percent conservative to 100 percent conservative) ends of the scale. In contrast, 41 percent of nonvoters fall in the center of the distribution while only 12 percent fall at the left or right ends of the scale. Based on these results, Fiorina's characterization of the American public as non-ideological appears to apply much better to nonvoters than it does to voters. The large majority of voters in 2006 held fairly consistent opinions on a wide range of national issues. Moreover, these opinions were strongly related to their candidate preferences.

Table 3 shows that the location of voters on the liberal-conservative scale was a powerful predictor of their voting decisions in the 2006 House and Senate elections. Voters at the left end of the scale voted almost unanimously for Democratic House and Senate candidates while voters at the right end of the scale voted almost unanimously for Republican House and Senate candidates. In contrast, the minority of voters in the

middle of the scale, those whose opinions were the least consistent, divided their support fairly evenly between the two major parties.

[Table 3 goes here]

Ideological consistency was also strongly related to the willingness of voters to engage in political activities beyond voting. Figure 3 displays the relationship between location on the liberal-conservative issues scale and one form of political activism: giving money to a party or candidate. The data displayed in this figure show that voters located at the liberal and conservative ends of the scale were much more likely to donate money to a party or candidate than voters located near the center of the scale. Almost half of voters located at the liberal end of the scale reported giving money to a party or candidate in 2006, as did almost two-fifths of voters located at the conservative end of the scale. In contrast, less than one-eighth of voters located near the center of the scale reported giving money to a party or candidate. As a result, those donating money to the parties and candidates in 2006 were even more polarized in their opinions than the overall electorate: 56 percent of campaign contributors were found at the left or right ends of the scale compared with only 39 percent of all voters.

[Figure 3 goes here]

The result of the voting patterns displayed in Table 3 was a very high level of ideological differentiation between Democratic and Republican voters in 2006. This can be seen very clearly in Figure 4 which displays the distributions of Democratic and Republican House voters on the liberal-conservative scale. There is almost no overlap between the two distributions: 89 of Democratic House voters are located to the left of center while 84 percent of Republican House voters are located to the right of center.

Democratic House voters had an average score of 28 percent conservative on the scale while Republican House voters had an average score of 70 percent conservative. The Senate pattern was even stronger: 91 percent of Democratic Senate voters were located to the left of center while 88 percent of Republican Senate voters were located to the right of center. Democratic Senate voters had an average score of 27 percent conservative on the scale while Republican Senate voters had an average score of 72 percent conservative. Moreover, the ideologies of Democratic and Republican voters were almost identical in every region of the country. The average score of Democratic House voters was 29 percent conservative in the South, 28 percent conservative in the Northeast, 29 percent conservative in the Midwest, and 25 percent conservative in the West. The average score of Republican House voters was 69 percent conservative in the South, 70 percent conservative in the Northeast, 70 percent conservative in the Midwest, and 72 percent conservative in the West.

[Figure 4 goes here]

There were sharp differences between Democratic and Republican voters on every one of the issues included in the liberal-conservative scale. These differences are displayed in Table 4. The largest differences between Democratic and Republican voters in 2006 were over the war in Iraq. Eighty-six percent of Democratic House voters considered the war a mistake compared with only 17 percent of Republican House voters and 83 percent of Democratic House voters favored a proposal to immediately begin withdrawing American troops from Iraq compared with only 25 percent of Republican House voters. There were also differences of over 50 percentage points on such issues as stem cell research, social security private accounts, and capital gains tax cuts. The

smallest difference between Democratic and Republican voters was found on the issue of immigration. Even here, however, there was a difference of 38 percentage points between Democratic and Republican House voters in support for a proposal to allow illegal immigrants to obtain American citizenship. The dramatic differences between the views of Democratic and Republican voters on a wide range of cultural, economic, and national security issues indicate that partisan polarization in Congress does not exist in a vacuum. Democrats and Republicans in Congress appear to be accurately reflecting the views of their supporters in the electorate.

[Table 4 goes here]

Ideology and Partisanship in the Electorate

Recent elections have seen a resurgence of partisanship in the American electorate. The proportion of pure independents in the electorate has been declining since the 1970s while the level of partisan voting has been increasing (Bartels 2000). The evidence from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study indicates that these trends continued in 2006. According to the CCES data, 91 percent of the voters in the 2006 House and Senate elections identified with or leaned toward one of the two major parties. Ninety percent of Democratic identifiers and leaners and 85 percent of Republican identifiers and leaners voted for their own party's House candidate; 94 percent of Democratic identifiers and leaners and 87 percent of Republican identifiers and leaners voted for their own party's Senate candidate.

Table 5 displays the relationship between the 2006 House and Senate vote and the seven-point party identification scale. According to the CCES data, leaning independents were more loyal to their party than weak identifiers and were almost as loyal as strong

identifiers. Ninety percent of Democratic leaners voted for a Democratic House candidate compared with 82 percent of weak Democrats and 94 percent of strong Democrats; 95 percent of Democratic leaners voted for a Democratic Senate candidate compared with 89 percent of weak Democrats and 95 percent of strong Democrats. Similarly, 84 percent of independent Republicans voted for a Republican House candidate compared with 74 percent of weak Republicans and 92 percent of strong Republicans while 88 percent of independent Republicans voted for a Republican Senate candidate compared with 75 percent of weak Republicans and 94 percent of strong Republicans.

[Table 5 goes here]

A large part of the explanation for the high level of partisan voting in 2006 and other recent elections is the high level of consistency between party identification and ideology in the American electorate. Among voters in the CCES survey, 94 percent of Democratic identifiers and leaners were found on the left side of the liberal-conservative scale while 88 percent of Republican identifiers and leaners were found on the right side of the scale. Ninety-two percent of liberal Democrats and 90 percent of conservative Republicans voted for their own party's House candidate. In contrast, only 56 percent of conservative Democrats and 48 percent of liberal Republicans voted for their own party's House candidate. Similarly, 96 percent of liberal Democrats and 94 percent of conservative Republicans voted for their own party's Senate candidate while only 63 percent of conservative Democrats and 47 percent of liberal Republicans voted for their own party's Senate candidate.

[Figure 5 goes here]

Figure 5 displays the average score of voters on the liberal-conservative scale in relation to the seven-point party identification scale. These results go a long way toward explaining why independent leaners behave much more like partisans than like pure independents. Independent Democrats were considerably more liberal than weak Democrats and almost as liberal as strong Democrats. Similarly, independent Republicans were considerably more conservative than weak Republicans, although not as conservative as strong Republicans. Ideologically, these independent leaners were much more similar to their co-partisans than to each other. These findings suggest that the high level of party loyalty of independent leaners in 2006 and other recent elections is based on their ideological orientations, not just a short-term preference for one party or the other. Thus, the findings support the conclusion of Keith et al. (1992) that independent leaners should be considered partisans rather than independents.

The role of ideology and social background characteristics in the development of partisan identity has been a subject of debate among political scientists (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002; Abramowitz and Saunders 2006). In order to address the issue of the centrality of ideology to partisan identity in the American electorate, I conducted a discriminant analysis of party identification among voters in the CCES survey using ideology and a wide variety of social background characteristics including age, race, gender, education, family income, religion, marital status, and church attendance, to predict Democratic vs. Republican identification. Based on our earlier results indicating that independent leaners should be considered partisans rather than independents, independent leaners were combined with strong and weak identifiers into the two partisan groups. The results of the discriminant analysis are displayed in Table 6.

[Table 6 goes here]

Overall, the variables included in the discriminant analysis correctly classified 91.7 percent of Democratic and Republican identifiers. However, an examination of the standardized canonical discriminant function coefficients in Table 6 shows that one variable had far greater predictive power than any other: ideology. In fact, the liberal-conservative scale alone correctly predicted the party identification of 91.3 percent of voters in the CCES survey. In contrast, all of the social background variables together only correctly predicted the partisan identification of 70.6 percent of voters. Social characteristics added almost no predictive power to ideology alone. Based on these results, ideology appears to be much more central to voters' partisan identities than social characteristics such as class, gender, and race.

Discussion and Conclusions

American politics has changed dramatically in the half century since Philip Converse conducted his path-breaking research on belief systems in mass publics. The educational level of the American electorate has risen steadily. Just as importantly, ideological conflict among political elites has greatly intensified. The findings presented in this paper from the 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study indicate that these changes have had profound consequences for electoral competition in the United States. To a considerable extent, electoral competition in the United States is now structured by ideology. Voters with relatively coherent ideological preferences choose between parties with relatively clear and distinct ideological positions. At least on the electoral side, the conditions for responsible party government have largely been met.

It is important to recognize, however, that the conclusions of this paper regarding the role of ideology in structuring mass political behavior in the United States apply mainly to the politically engaged segment of the public. Data from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study indicate that ideological constraint and polarization were much greater among those who voted in the 2006 midterm elections than among those who did not vote. Whether the lack of consistency evident in the opinions of nonvoters reflects fundamental cognitive limitations, lack of interest in the issues that dominate the contemporary political agenda or genuine ambivalence about these issues remains unclear. As the role of ideological conflict in the electoral process increases, however, there is a risk that those citizens who for whatever reason lack a consistent ideological outlook will become increasingly alienated from the two major parties and from the electoral process itself. The American public appears to be increasingly divided into two groups: the politically engaged, who view politics in ideological terms, and the politically disengaged, who do not.

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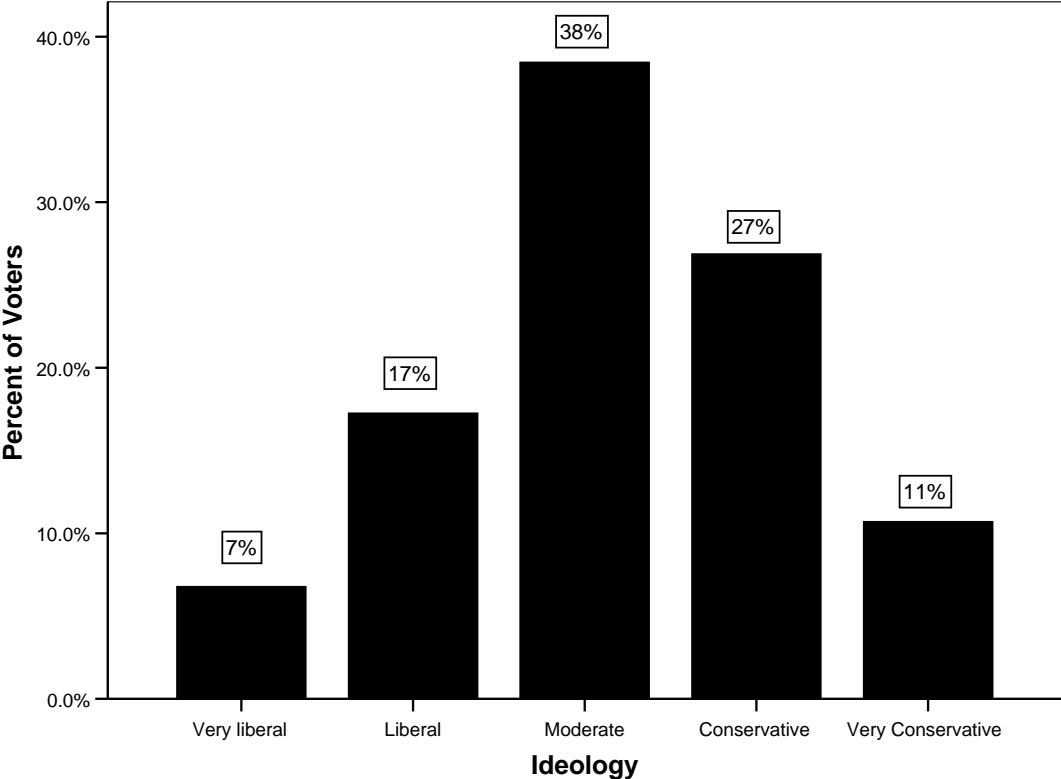
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**Table 1. Characteristics of 2006 Electorate: National Exit Poll vs.
Cooperative Congressional Election Study**

		NEP	CCES
Gender	Male	49%	51%
	Female	51	49
Race	White	79%	74%
	Black	10	10
	Hispanic	8	11
	Other	4	5
Age	18-29	12%	13%
	30-44	24	34
	45-59	34	39
	60+	29	14
Income	LT \$30,000	19%	18%
	\$30-50,000	21	22
	\$50-100,000	38	39
	\$100-150,000	13	14
	\$150,000+	10	7
Education	HS or less	24%	40%
	Some College	31	32
	College Grad	27	18
	Postgraduate	18	10
Party Id	Democrat	38%	33%
	Independent	26	35
	Republican	36	32
House Vote	Democratic	54%	54%
	Republican	46	46

Source: 2006 National Exit Poll and 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study

Figure 1. Ideological Identification of Voters in 2006 Midterm Election



Source: 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study

Table 2. Product-Moment Correlations among 12 Issues in CCES

A. Voters

	abortion	affirm action	capgains taxcut	enviro vs. jobs	libcon id	immig	iraq withdraw	iraq mistake	min wage	partial birth	ss private	stem cell
abortion	1.000	.364	.431	.417	.575	.289	.473	.548	.382	.602	.478	.634
affirm action	.364	1.000	.448	.405	.503	.412	.451	.494	.428	.370	.474	.407
capgains taxcut	.431	.448	1.000	.455	.537	.300	.559	.590	.483	.430	.611	.501
enviro vs. jobs	.417	.405	.455	1.000	.487	.313	.455	.505	.430	.401	.487	.468
libcon id	.575	.503	.537	.487	1.000	.395	.563	.621	.478	.510	.545	.586
immig	.289	.412	.300	.313	.395	1.000	.318	.362	.287	.287	.298	.317
iraq withdraw	.473	.451	.559	.455	.563	.318	1.000	.715	.535	.437	.578	.557
iraq mistake	.548	.494	.590	.505	.621	.362	.715	1.000	.520	.505	.653	.617
min wage	.382	.428	.483	.430	.478	.287	.535	.520	1.000	.353	.504	.494
late abortion	.602	.370	.430	.401	.510	.287	.437	.505	.353	1.000	.479	.524
ss private	.478	.474	.611	.487	.545	.298	.578	.653	.504	.479	1.000	.541
stem cell	.634	.407	.501	.468	.586	.317	.557	.617	.494	.524	.541	1.000

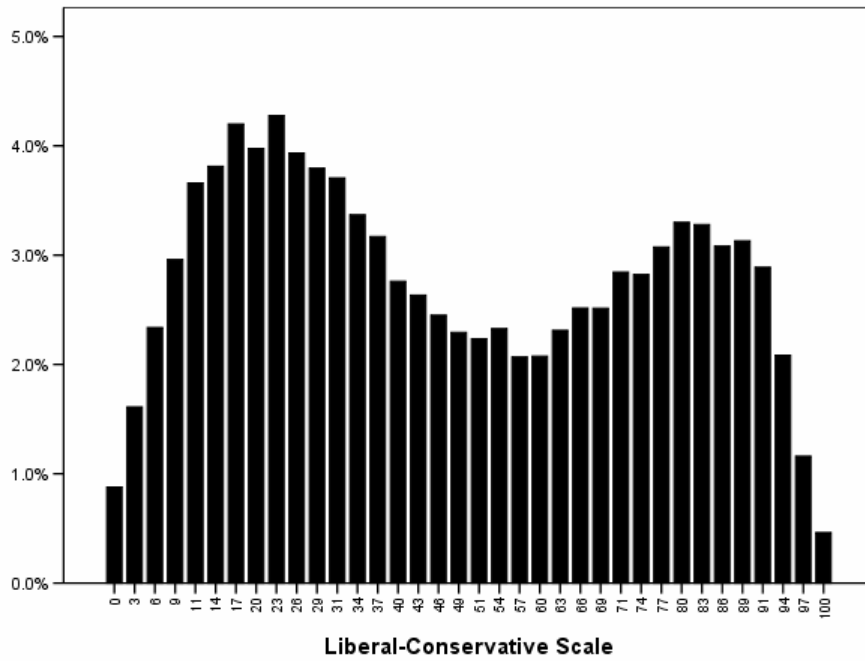
B. Nonvoters

	abortion	affirm act	capgains taxcut	enviro vs. jobs	libcon id	immig	iraq withdrawal	iraq mistake	min wage	partial birth	ss private	stem cell
abortion	1.000	.101	.141	.135	.403	.105	.187	.265	.115	.429	.197	.478
affirm act	.101	1.000	.188	.126	.259	.268	.189	.227	.217	.130	.134	.146
capgains taxcut	.141	.188	1.000	.178	.255	.061	.237	.239	.232	.147	.251	.149
enviro vs. jobs	.135	.126	.178	1.000	.254	.169	.146	.214	.164	.146	.131	.214
libcon id	.403	.259	.255	.254	1.000	.214	.278	.358	.222	.300	.205	.373
immig	.105	.268	.061	.169	.214	1.000	.112	.183	.104	.117	.082	.140
iraq withdraw	.187	.189	.237	.146	.278	.112	1.000	.445	.305	.144	.197	.240
iraq mistake	.265	.227	.239	.214	.358	.183	.445	1.000	.179	.237	.297	.266
min wage	.115	.217	.232	.164	.222	.104	.305	.179	1.000	.058	.201	.205
partial birth	.429	.130	.147	.146	.300	.117	.144	.237	.058	1.000	.164	.304
ss private	.197	.134	.251	.131	.205	.082	.197	.297	.201	.164	1.000	.148
stem cell	.478	.146	.149	.214	.373	.140	.240	.266	.205	.304	.148	1.000

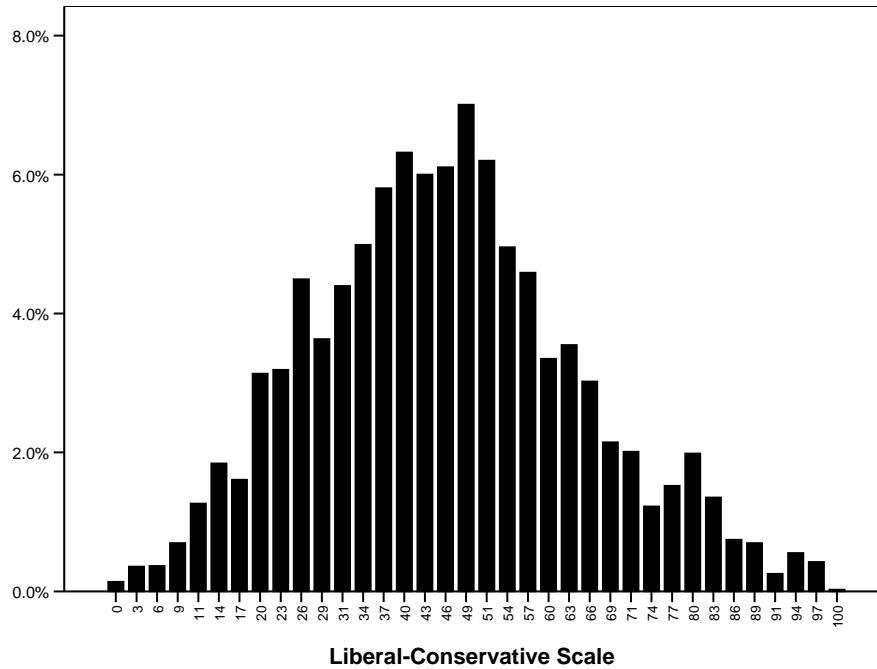
Source: 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study

Figure 2. Distribution of Voters and Nonvoters on Liberal-Conservative Issues Scale

A. Voters



B. Nonvoters



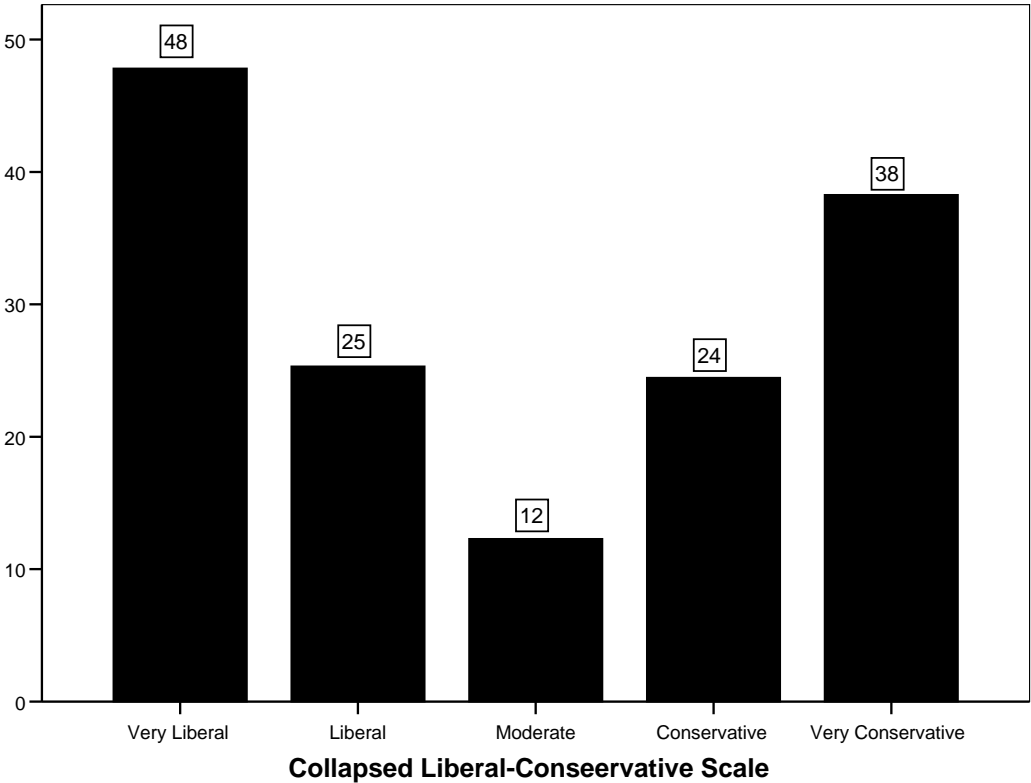
Source: 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study

Table 3. Percentage Voting Democratic for House and Senate by Ideology

Liberal-Conservative Issues Scale	House	Senate
Very Liberal (0-19%)	97	99
Liberal (20-39%)	88	92
Moderate (40-59%)	55	58
Conservative (60-79%)	14	10
Very Conservative (80-100%)	4	2
Kendall's Tau-c	.83	.88

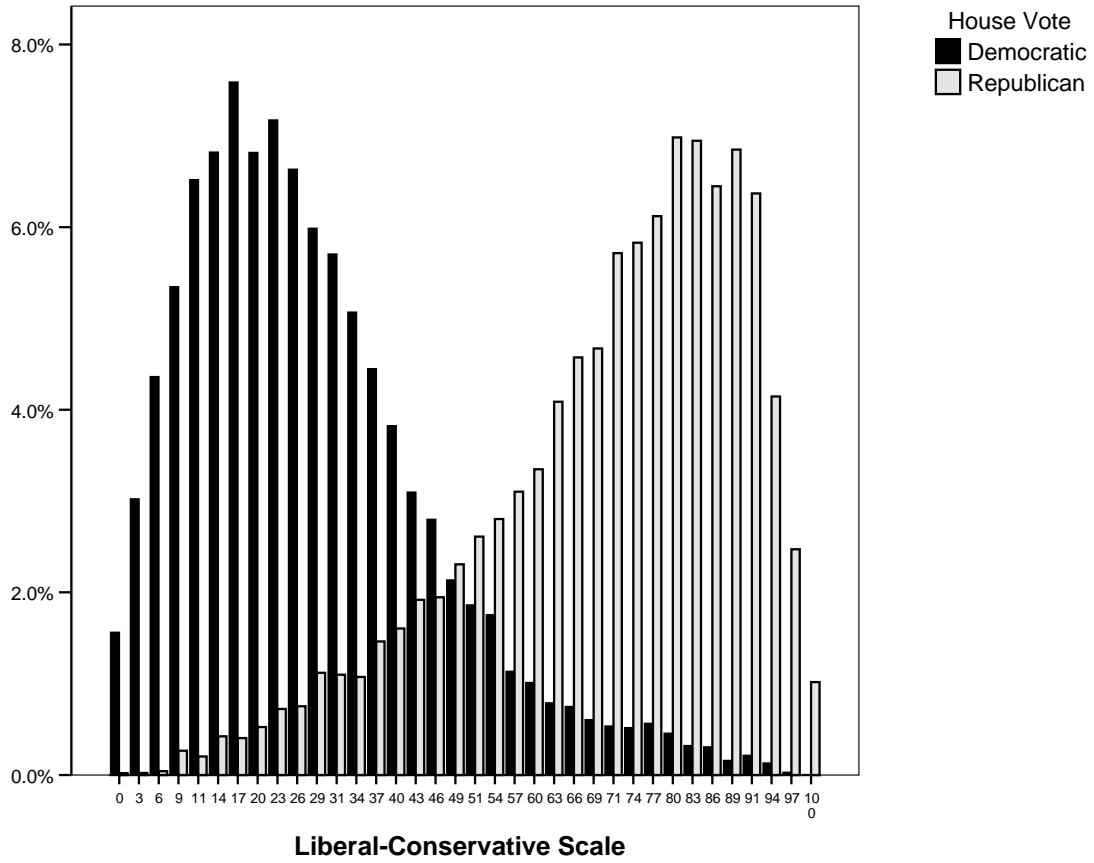
Source: 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study

Figure 3. Percentage of Voters Donating Money to a Party or Candidate by Ideology



Source: 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study

Figure 4. Ideologies of Democratic vs. Republican House Voters in 2006



Source: 2006 CCES

Table 4. Positions of Democratic and Republican House Voters on Policy Issues: Percentage Taking Liberal Position

Issue Position	Democratic Voters	Republican Voters	Difference
Abortion	69	21	48
Late-Term Abortion Ban	57	16	41
Affirmative Action	51	12	39
Capital Gains Tax Cuts	69	16	53
Environment vs. Jobs	70	26	44
Immigrant Citizenship	51	18	33
Iraq a Mistake	86	17	69
Iraq Troop Withdrawal	83	25	58
Minimum Wage	93	49	44
Social Security Accounts	64	11	53
Stem Cell Research	87	32	55
Average	71	22	49

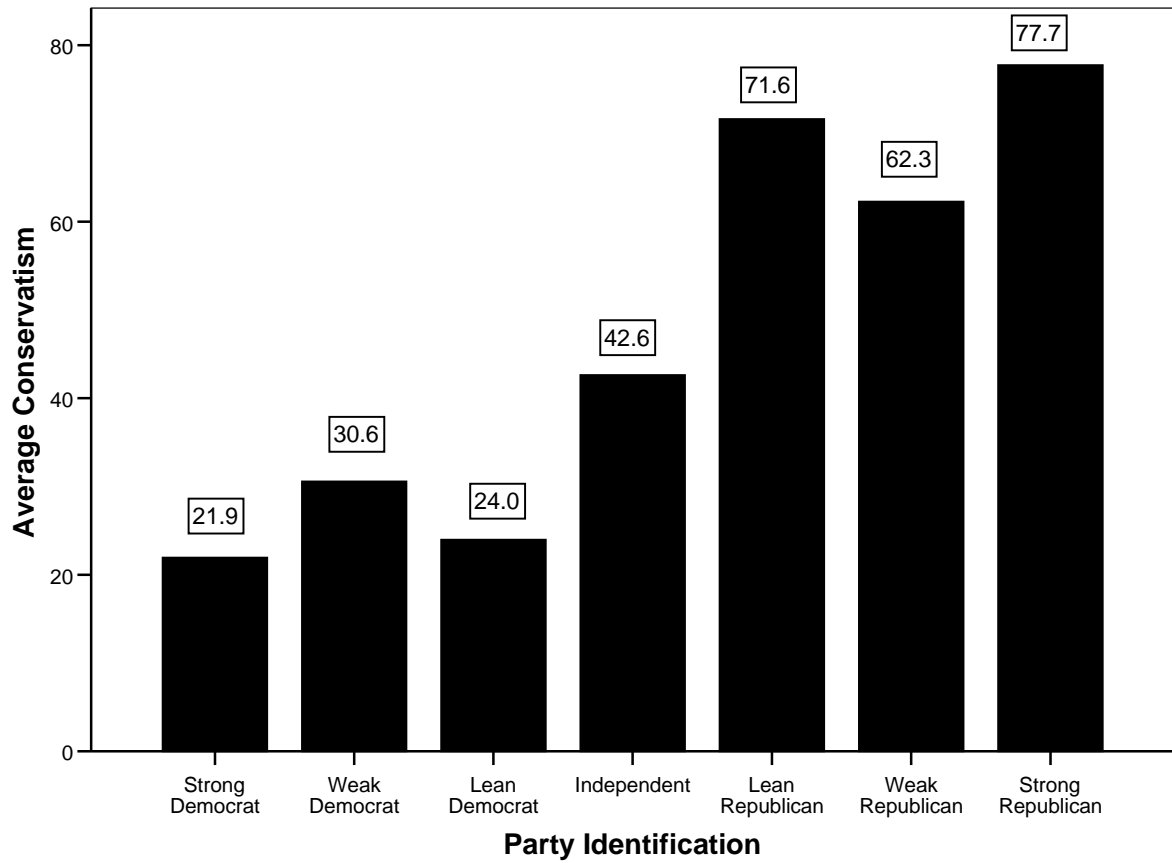
Source: 2006 CCES

Table 5. Percentage Voting Democratic for House and Senate in 2006 by Party Identification

Party Identification	House	Senate
Strong Democrat	94	96
Weak Democrat	82	89
Independent Dem	90	95
Pure Independent	62	63
Independent Republican	16	12
Weak Republican	26	25
Strong Republican	8	6
Kendall's Tau-c	.77	.82

Source: 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study

Figure 5. Average Conservatism of Voters in 2006 Midterm Election by Party Identification



Source; 2006 CCES

Table 6. Results of Discriminant Analysis of Party Identification

Standardized Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients

	Function
	1
Age	.025
Education	.096
Gender	-.024
Family income	.071
Marital status	.007
Black	-.159
Hispanic	-.013
Other race	-.013
Catholic	-.058
Jewish	-.022
Other religion	-.033
No religion	-.038
Church attendance	-.030
Ideology	.977

Canonical Correlation = .831
Percentage Correctly Classified = 91.7

Note: Predicted groups are strong, weak, and independent Democrats vs. strong, weak, and independent Republicans.

Source: 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study