

CONSERVATIVES AND LIBERALS

PARTISAN NEWS, A POLARIZED PUBLIC, AND POPULAR MEDIA CONSUMPTION

A THESIS

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INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the American republic there has been an intricate relationship between the media, public officials, and the public. The media is the invaluable link between elected officials and their constituents: elected officials need the media to relay their messages and constituents need to know what their elected officials are doing to advance their interests. The public votes for their officials and they need the media to gain information on how and why they should vote. Lately, the relationship between the press and the public has changed due to an increase in both media fragmentation and partisan polarization. This has affected not only the political news that networks supply but also the political news that people demand.

Fragmentation has created more media channels and with these channels comes new niches for partisan news. Polarization has led to liberalization of the Democratic Party and a corresponding conservative push in the Republican Party. The overall outcomes of these circumstances are more partisan news outlets and a more partisan electorate that perpetuates this partisan media. Ratings data suggests that outlets promoting conservative viewpoints are much more popular among the American public than their liberal counterparts. The question I ask in this thesis is who is it that watches these partisan programs, and what is it about those who watch conservative programs that make them more likely to consume the partisan media than those who watch liberal programs? An analysis of American National Election Survey (ANES) data demonstrates what may have been expected (but had not been proven)—that conservatives make up the base of conservative program-viewers while liberals make up the base of liberal program-viewers. Therefore conservatives watch more conservative programming than liberals watch liberal programming. The difference in consumption by group is especially perplexing when compared to the way that conservatives and liberals vote in elections. There is a nearly 50-50 split between Republicans and Democrats in Congress, which suggests that conservatives and liberals turn out to vote similarly. If they go to the polls equally then why do liberals and conservatives use the media disproportionately?

I assert that the reason for this comes from the fundamental differences between liberals and conservatives that would affect their approach to information and therefore the media. Previous literature finds that liberals tend to be more open-minded while conservatives are more conscientious. Applying this to media uses and gratifications, it would imply that liberals would watch more programs from different media sources, while conservatives are more likely to watch fewer programs from familiar sources. Liberals would watch a wider variety of programs that have different political opinions, while conservatives would be more likely to allege bias in the news and flock to media outlets that confirm their preexisting beliefs. The conservative concentration of media use compared to the vast spread of liberal media over different programs and sources would explain why

conservative media appears more popular than its liberal counterpart. Through an analysis of ANES data I find strong evidence to confirm the claim that the fundamental psychological differences between the ideologies manifest in media usage and justify the difference in consumption patterns.

This thesis is organized as follows (see Figure 1): in Chapter 1 I discuss the current media environment, the supply and demand of the news media, and ratings data that demonstrate the discrepancy in demand for partisan news among the American public. Chapter 2 explores who makes up the groups that consume partisan media and how these groups tend to vote. Chapter 3 poses the main question of the thesis: why is consumption different for liberals and conservatives? The explanation for the discrepancy lies in the fundamental differences between liberals and conservatives that affect their uses and gratifications of the media. Chapters 4 and 5 then provide an analysis of liberal and conservative media consumption, respectively. Chapter 6 concludes the results of my research and suggests areas for future study.

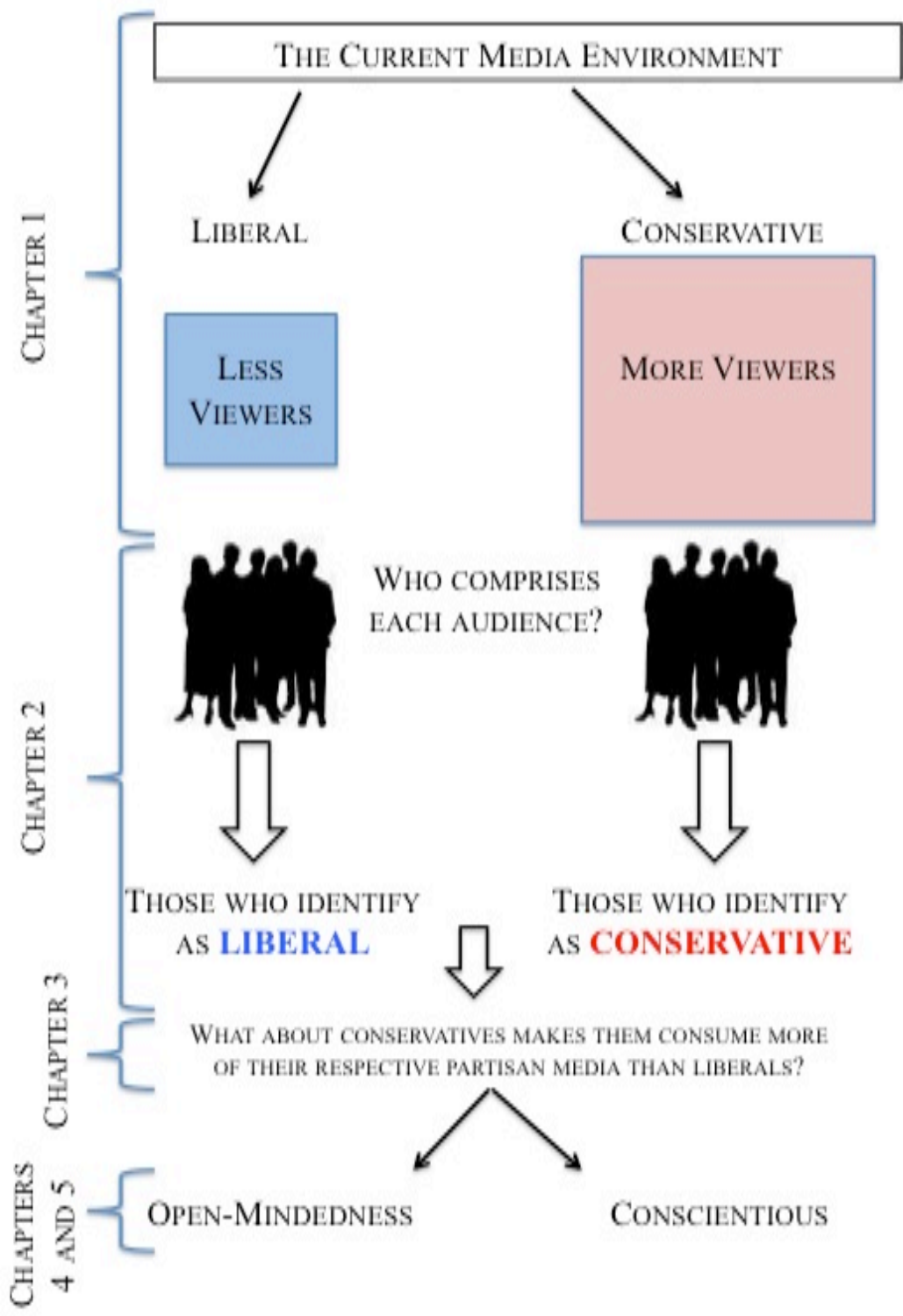


FIGURE 1: THE ARGUMENTS OF THIS THESIS

CHAPTER 1: THE CURRENT MEDIA ENVIRONMENT: SUPPLY AND DEMAND

MEDIA FRAGMENTATION: THE SUPPLY OF PARTISAN MEDIA

In the mid-twentieth century, in the context of World War II and the proceeding economic boom in America, the news media was a uniform institution that served to inform the American people. This continued until the 1970's when institutional news saw increased competition due to the influx of new outlets such as cable news, the Internet, and talk radio. While the progression of cable and the Internet were due to technological advances, the rise of ideological talk radio and partisan news generally can be attributed to the abolition of the Fairness Doctrine of 1949.

The Doctrine dictated that public broadcasters had a duty to present multiple perspectives of significant issues to the public. When it was enacted in 1949, lawmakers from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) were concerned by the domination of the Big Three networks (ABC, NBC, and CBS) and feared that these three networks would present biased information to the public. Due to broadcasting technology at the time, the Big Three possessed the entirety of the television market share. The enactment of the Fairness Doctrine was intended to level the opportunities for all opinions and to make sure that different ideas were covered in the media. The FCC instated the policy in 1949, Congress backed it in 1954, and the Supreme Court upheld the Doctrine as consistent with the First Amendment in 1969 in *Red Lion Broadcasting Co. v. FCC*. By President Reagan's second term, FCC Chairman Mark Fowler initiated the repeal of the Doctrine, arguing that the original concern of scarcity in broadcasting was no longer an issue. As opposed to 1949, by the 1980's there was an increased number of media outlets on television, the radio, and in print media. Fowler and his supporters insisted that with so many more outlets, there were sufficient opportunities for different opinions to get airtime. In 1987 the FCC voted 4-0 on a full repeal of the Doctrine.

In the years since the repeal many Democratic Congressmen have attempted to bring the Doctrine back, but both Republican Congressmen and conservative media figures have called the Doctrine an infringement on the First Amendment and an uncalled-for expansion of the federal government. With this new change in the way that media outlets are allowed to present political news, numerical data suggests the most successful of these new programs have been those with conservative outlooks (Ladd 2012, and further demonstrated later in this chapter). This explains the discrepancy in support for reinstating the Doctrine among liberals and conservatives. The end of the Fairness Doctrine in 1987 is credited with the creation and rise of today's partisan programming because broadcasters do not have to give competing views airtime, which allows for political news to

be expressed with partisan opinions¹. The partisan media that we have now would not be able to run their current programming had the FCC not repealed the Fairness Doctrine. It is worth noting the debatable coincidence that the Doctrine was repealed in 1987 and Rush Limbaugh's notoriously partisan radio program, *The Rush Limbaugh Show*, began in 1988.

Major news networks created partisan news stations because they saw the financial opportunities available in this type of programming. Mullainathan and Schleifer (2005) study the economics of newspapers and find that when papers assume that readers have beliefs that they like to see confirmed, they then skew stories towards particular biases to profit on increased readership. When readers have differing beliefs on issues, however, the media segments and slants towards more extremes. Mullainathan and Schleifer's research demonstrates how the partisan media era creates new economic incentives for editorial slant towards biases.

These incentives grew as cable television expanded and became more profitable as a medium. By 2000, 60% of Americans reported watching cable news on a regular basis. By 2009 the average primetime viewership of cable news rose to 3.8 million viewers a night, up from 1.8 million in 1998². Cable news network MSNBC was created as part of the NBC unit of General Electric's media conglomerate in 1996. Microsoft joined GE in the investment, spending \$220 million for 50% of the share of the new cable network. Similarly the Fox News Channel launched just three months after MSNBC as part of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation³. When it first launched, Fox News only reached 10 million households because of the economics of expanding media markets. Despite its slow expansion, by 2000, for the network's first presidential election, its broadcasting reached 56 million homes for a 440% increase in viewers⁴. These large companies took a significant risk in creating news stations designed to only appeal to a certain subset of viewers. Due to polarization in politics and the new media environment, their risks appear to have paid off.

THE POLARIZATION OF THE AMERICAN ELECTORATE

In the 1970's the increasing partisanship in the supply of news was met by the increasing polarization among the viewers who demanded the news. The fragmentation of the media and subsequent partisanship in programming was welcomed by an American public that was becoming more polarized (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006; Ladd 2012). McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal define two characteristics that reveal the emergence of polarization: first, that moderates in Congress are diminishing, and second, that "conservative" and "liberal" have

¹ Hagey, Keach. "POLITICO." *POLITICO*. 16 Jan. 11. Web. 04 Nov. 2012.
<<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0111/47669.html>>.

² Project for Excellence in Journalism. 2009. "The State of the News Media: An Annual Report on American Journalism." <http://www.stateofthemediamedia.org/2009/> (Accessed November 1, 2012).

³ For point of comparison, CNN launched in 1980 as the first 24-hour news network. CNN was founded by Ted Turner and 25 other investors as a division of the Turner Broadcasting System.

⁴ Allan, Johnson. "Election Gave Cable News a Wild Ratings Ride, but Now It Needs an Encore." *Chicago Tribune* [Chicago] 9 Dec. 2000: Print

become synonymous with “Republican” and “Democrat.” McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal attribute the increase in polarization to “fundamental changes in the American society and economy.” Because parties have become more polarized, the electorate has more polarized choices for their elected officials (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998).

Weisberg and Devine (2010) find evidence for polarization through an analysis of the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections, discovering that very few registered Republicans voted for the Democratic nominee and the same for registered Democrats and the Republican nominee. Based on survey data, they find that as polarization grows, party identification lowers: less people identify as Democrat or Republican, and more as Independent. Identification strengthens, however, among those who still identify with the party: people are more likely to be “strong” rather than “leaning” Democrats or Republicans. The findings of this study are significant because Weisberg and Devine note that party identification is a “crucial factor in explaining political behavior.” (Weisberg and Devine 2010, 237) These ideas of ideological labels influencing political attitudes and the way people vote have long been supported in research (Holm and Robinson 1978; Levitin and Miller 1979) but these labels have strengthened with polarization. Voters also use their partisan predispositions as cues for assessing information about candidates rather than forming their opinions from information of more traditional outlets, like the media (Ladd 2010). People are increasingly using their ideological labels as shortcuts for gaining information about elections.

Conservatism specifically as a label has intensified in recent years. Piereson (2010) looks at the 2010 midterm election from the political perspective that the general electorate was still very dissatisfied with the Bush Administration. Given that fact, it was highly impressive that the Republicans achieved significant wins and took back the House of Representatives. Piereson attributes this to the Republicans’ message of a conservative identity. This identity has deep roots in the American electorate as more people identify as conservative. Since Ronald Reagan’s election in 1980, conservative ideas, as represented by Republican Party platforms, have existed in the political mainstream while liberal ideas have been the minority. Piereson notes that the failures of the Bush Administration did not dampen conservatives in pursuing their ideologies: “the fact that conservatism continues to prosper while Republicanism falters is yet one more sign that conservatism is more of an independent movement than just another adjunct of the Republican Party.” (Piereson 2010, 55) The strength of conservatism as an ideology propels it as a political movement that encourages voter turnout and the legislative agenda⁵.

⁵ There is a significant lack of literature on liberalism as an ideological label in modern American culture after the rise of the New Left in the 1960’s. While liberalism has also strengthened with polarization, there is less recent literature to emphasize this than there is with conservatism.

CAUSES OF POLARIZATION

The polarization of the electorate is significant because ideologies and their link to party labels explain voting patterns. Most research attributes partisan polarization to candidates' pandering to party activists in the primaries. Activists on both sides represent the far ideological wings of the parties. They tend to be very involved in the primary process and possess valuable resources such as time and money for candidates (Jacobson 2012). McCloskey, Hoffman and O'Hara (1960) argue that political parties are more about winning political contests than they are about actual ideologies, so parties will change their platforms based on what will help them succeed in these contests. If the parties are all about winning, then rational candidates representing the party will pander to groups—like the primary constituencies—to win elections.

The continuation of polarization can be explained by the spatial voter model which states that people will vote in their own self-interest. When voters are further away from one politician's beliefs, they will vote for another one who is closer to their own ideology (Enelow 1984). When candidates are more polarized from pandering to party activists, they move farther from the center (moderate) political ideology. Voters choose politicians: when politicians are more polarized, voters have more polarized choices. The partisanship among voters that emerges from the extreme choices increases mobilization among the electorate (Caldiera, Patterson and Markko 1985) and therefore significantly impacts the American political system because it shifts interests and decisions. Abramowitz (2010) relates these concepts of choices and partisanship to the 2010 midterm election. He argues that the 2008 political victory for the left ignited mobilization among the right to restore conservatives to power in 2010. The emergence of the successful far right Tea Party movement was a result of mainstream conservative voters looking for a stronger voice in opposition to the left.

Older research suggests that it is not the electorate, but rather the parties that have become more polarized. Through an analysis of data from the 1994 and 1996 elections Abramowitz and Saunders (1998) suggest that the Democratic and Republican Parties themselves became more polarized rather than the voters. They argue that the elected politicians were more liberal and conservative, respectively, which affects legislation and therefore how people view the government and politics. This creates more distress about the ideologies of politicians and fuels the competitive desire to have the other party out of power. Fiorina, Abrams and Pope (2005) also assert that citizens are not the ones who are polarized because there is little evidence to prove that American ideological positions have become more polarized. Their choices, rather than their actual opinions, have become more polarized as seen by their selection of more polarized elected officials.

More recent research however demonstrates that the electorate, in addition to public officials, has become more polarized. Abramowitz, Alexander and Gunning (2006) observe the decreasing competition of House elections and conclude that House districts are becoming increasingly

polarized: Democratic districts are becoming more solidly Democratic and the same with Republican districts. Their “partisan polarization hypothesis” (page 77) explains demographic change and ideological realignment—or partisan sorting—as reasons for increased district partisanship. Jacobson (2012), through analysis of 2010 Cooperative Congressional Election Study data, supports this overall theory and concludes that both citizens and political elites are polarized, and that partisan sorting can polarize the electorate despite these partisans not taking on extreme political positions.

A potential explanation for why the research is split on the polarization of the electorate—despite agreeing on the polarization of politicians—is the presidency of George W. Bush. Jacobson (2006) discusses President Bush as a polarizing figure in American politics through an analysis of public opinion data. Jacobson finds that there is an increase in liberals who identify as Democrats and conservatives who identify as Republicans during Bush’s administration. He also finds a correlation between religious attachment and party identification during Bush’s terms in office. Jacobson identifies the Florida re-count process during the 2000 election, Bush’s controversial leadership after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the War in Iraq as reasons for polarizing the public.

EFFECTS OF THE FRAGMENTED MEDIA ON THE POLARIZED PUBLIC

The existence of the fragmented media environment allows the public to engage in and perpetuate the culture of polarized politics. This media system allows people more options to consume and less monitoring of objectivity, so the political media is more subject to partisanship (Ladd 2012). Baum and Groeling (2008) analyze five online news sources (wires, cable news websites and political blogs) and compare their news judgment in the months before the 2006-midterm elections. They observed the “top news” each site selected and then compared the editorials in the wires (AP and Reuters) to more partisan blogs (DailyKos (liberal) and FreeRepublican (conservative)), and cable news source, FoxNews.com. They find more partisanship in the articles from the non-wires, while the wires’ news choices demonstrate more of the traditional news value of objectivity.

Because of this partisanship in media content, the public has a skewed view of their elected officials. The media connects people to their elected officials, so when looking at the affects of the media on the public, influence is not just relevant in terms of changing opinions, but also in the effect of what viewers think about and what they regard as important (McCombs and Shaw 1972). This is significant because what viewers think is important affects what politicians and policy makers think is important. The press “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about” (Cohen 1963, page 5). Agenda-setting theory, conceptualized by McCombs and Shaw (1972), asserts that when media editors choose what to air or publish—and what not to—they influence the perceived importance of the issues to the public. Media consumers gain information about the real world through a mediated lens so what

editors show them impacts their perception of reality. If the media covers a story extensively, the public believes that the subject is incredibly important because it was worthy of so much coverage. The news media has the power to set the public agenda, which has immense implications for their role in the relationship between the public and their elected representatives.

The editorial slant seen in today's media therefore is significant because it affects voters' perceptions of politicians and policy. Kahn and Kenney (2002) analyze 60 Senate elections over three election years and find that newspapers' informative coverage of Senators is often influenced by whom the paper supports in their editorial section. They find that the effects of this coverage are that readers have more positive feelings about Senators whom their newspapers have endorsed. This impact is strongest among citizens who read their local newspaper frequently and for coverage of races that gather a lot of media attention. Similarly, Druckman and Parkin's (2005) research combines a comprehensive content analysis of newspapers with Election Day polls, looking at the slant of campaign coverage—positive or negative—and how it effects voters' evaluations of candidates and their vote choice. They found slant in many of the publications they looked at and concluded that relative editorial slant influenced voters' decisions on Election Day.

THE EFFECT OF EDITORIAL SLANT ON CONSERVATIVES AND THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

The effects of editorial slant due to general partisanship in the media also apply specifically to conservative media and opinions. Fox News is the most popular voice among conservatives in the media, and literature suggests that Fox News' conservative slant has affected viewers. Groeling and Baum (2007) performed a content analysis and confirm that Fox News indeed has a pro-Republican editorial slant. Morris' (2005) research agrees with this conservative slant and suggests that the viewers of Fox News are becoming increasingly polarized. Morris' study uses CNN as a liberal source for comparison against Fox News, and finds that the liberal viewers of CNN are also becoming increasingly polarized. Morris notes that because causality cannot be established, it is unclear if Fox News and CNN are creating these sentiments among viewers, or if Fox News and CNN pander to viewers who are already more polarized for higher ratings.

While the biases of partisan news are well known, people still trust partisan news even though they know it is biased. Cain, Loewenstein and Moore (2006) study disclosure of conflicts of interest in decision-making and how it affects trust. In their experiment they found that people do not discount advice from advisors who they know are biased as much as they should given that they know their conflict of interest. Applying this to partisan programs, people are less likely to accommodate for partisan slant in the media as much as they should, even when they know the programs are biased. This means that people are still influenced by conservative or liberal programs even when they know the program they are watching is biased. Turner's (2005) research demonstrates that the general

public knows that Fox News has a conservative bias, which means that people are aware of the conflict of interest in Fox News' reporting.

There is substantial evidence of the concrete effects that Fox News has had on the voting public. DellaVigna and Kaplan (2006) attempt to establish causation by studying the introduction and spread of Fox News, founded in 1996, into new media markets. Their analysis found that Republicans gained votes in towns where Fox News was introduced and conclude that media bias matters for mobilization: Fox News increased voter turnout, especially in Democratic districts. Using Scarborough Research data, they find that the introduction of Fox News correlated with between 3% and 8% of viewers who changed their vote to Republican. Clinton and Enamorado's (2012) research looks at the effect that Fox News has had on what elected officials think public opinion is. They studied elections and positions taken by officials between 1996 and 2000, correlating these positions with the spread of Fox News to new media markets. They find that representatives from districts introduced to Fox News became more conservative than those who represent districts that had yet to see Fox News. Clinton and Enamorado's research finds evidence to support causal claims that Fox News influences those who are elected to take more conservative stances, despite not affecting who gets elected. Their findings imply that Fox News' framing and agenda-setting effects do not just affect viewers but also elected officials and therefore public policy.

In addition to Fox News, conservative pundits are also extremely successful at spreading conservative ideas throughout the media and have considerable effects on their audiences. Rush Limbaugh for example is well known for his large audience and controversial radio program. In 2008 Limbaugh's influence over his listeners became clear during the Democratic primaries. Donovan (2008) did a case study demonstrating the immense effect that Limbaugh has on mobilization and electoral behavior. In 2008, Limbaugh suggested that Republicans vote in the open Democratic primaries in order to sabotage the Democrats by extending their primary, and therefore weakening their candidates. Donovan shows that after Limbaugh made the claim that Republicans should vote in the Democratic primary, the number of Republicans who voted in the remaining open primaries skyrocketed. While Donovan acknowledges that there is no direct way to establish causality between Limbaugh's announcement and the turnout among Republicans, the timing of his strategic ploy corresponded with a short-term effect of increased Republican voter turnout in Democratic primaries. There was an increase of approximately 7% to 12% of Democratic primary voters who were Republican after Limbaugh's announcement. It is significant to note that while the literature suggests immense effects of conservative media, there is little conclusive research to suggest the effects of the liberal media. (I explore this idea more in Chapter 6.)

THE DEMAND FOR PARTISAN MEDIA

The previous section analyzed the supply of partisan news and the effects that this news has had on its viewers. This section turns to the demand for partisan news and the ratings that encourage the supply aforementioned.

In the demand for partisan news, television programs are the best indicator for consumption of programming. Television is the most popular method of news consumption⁶ and as specific networks, Fox News and MSNBC are most popularly known for their conservative-liberal dichotomy. The success of these partisan cable news networks is abundantly clear when looking at the \$869.2 million and \$186.6 million⁷ in profits that Fox News and MSNBC bring in, respectively. But as seen by the profits numbers, there is clearly a discrepancy in the popularity of these cable channels. The two stations provide similar media opportunities for partisan, cable, television news, however Fox News has disproportionately higher profits and ratings. On average, for primetime (8 PM to 11 PM) programs, Fox News has approximately 2,077,000 viewers, while MSNBC has approximately 777,000 viewers⁸; for the same time frame, conservative programming is watched over twice as much as liberal programming⁹. The programs in this time frame for Fox News are *The O'Reilly Factor* hosted by Bill O'Reilly (2,851, 000 viewers), *Hannity* hosted by Sean Hannity (1,850,000 viewers), and *On the Record with Greta* hosted by Greta van Susteren (1,850,000 viewers). The programs in the same time frame on MSNBC are *The Ed Show* with Ed Schultz (624,000 viewers), *The Rachel Maddow Show* hosted by Rachel Maddow (891,000 viewers), and *The Last Word* hosted by Lawrence O'Donnell (815,000 viewers). A similar demographic of hosts— two males and one female— and the similar news formats of the shows make the primetime lineups very comparable and yet still the conservative programs have larger audiences than the liberal programs¹⁰.

Another way to see the discrepancies in the demand for partisan news is the consumption and admiration of different pundits and program hosts. Many popular media figures have high salaries, which reflect their influence because it shows that people pay to watch, listen to, or read them. Monetary rewards like salary indicate approval and ideological consent on behalf of viewers, advertisers, and networks. For networks and organizations to pay these figures so much implies that they believe that these figures will bring in larger audiences for greater ratings and therefore more

⁶ "Americans Spending More Time Following the News." *Pew Research Center for the People and the Press RSS*. Web. 20 Mar. 2013.

⁷ "Cable: By the Numbers | State of the Media." *Cable: By the Numbers | State of the Media*. Web. 20 Mar. 2013.

⁸ "Cable News Ratings for Thursday, March 21, 2011 - Ratings | TVbytheNumbers." *TV Ratings, TV Nielsen Ratings, Television Show Ratings | TVbytheNumbers.com*. Web. 22 Mar 2013. <<http://tvbythenumbers.zap2it.com/2013/03/22/cable-news-ratings-for-thursday-march-21-2013/174467/>>.

⁹ Public Policy Polling. "PBS the Most Trusted Name in News." *Public Policy Polling*. Web. 7 April 2012. <http://www.publicpolicypolling.com/pdf/PPP_Release_National_0119930.pdf>

¹⁰ For the purposes of comparison, during primetime, the relatively neutral (though debatably still liberal) CNN averages 650,000 viewers, less than both Fox and MSNBC, but only 30% less than MSNBC, unlike the approximate 50% comparison between Fox and MSNBC viewers.

revenue. Rush Limbaugh, conservative radio talk show host for Clear Channel, has a net worth of approximately \$300 million and an annual salary of \$40 million¹¹. In 2008, Limbaugh signed an eight-year contract with Clear Channel for \$400 million. This extension of his contract shows that radio executives believe Limbaugh's conservative talking points will continue to be profitable for the next eight years—through 2016. Limbaugh's show airs from noon to three in the afternoon and maintains a daily average of 3.5 million listeners. Through syndication, he reaches 20 million Americans a week.¹²

Limbaugh has an extensive following but is also heavily controversial for many of the comments he makes. Recently Limbaugh made headlines by referring to Sandra Fluke, a Georgetown University law student, as a “slut” and a “prostitute”¹³ because she promoted employers providing contraceptives to their employees during the health care debate. Limbaugh's remarks caused uproar in the Beltway and beyond, culminating in attention from President Obama and Limbaugh eventually apologizing for his extreme comments. Despite losing some advertisers, Limbaugh actually saw a 60% increase in his ratings after the comments¹⁴.

Similar to Limbaugh, Sarah Palin, since her debut on the political main stage as the 2008 Republican Vice Presidential nominee, has benefitted economically from her conservatism, earning an estimated \$12 million. Previously the Governor of Alaska, Palin, upon entering the conservative political scene, began earning one hundred times her prior salary¹⁵. Palin, a young, attractive, and new face in the Republican Party, became a conservative celebrity and icon. In January of 2009 she started her own Political Action Committee, SarahPAC, which fundraised over \$1.7 million in its first six months, demonstrating her political influence. Palin released her memoir Going Rogue: An American Life in November 2009, and in less than two weeks, the book sold over 1 million copies, with 300,000 copies being sold on the first day¹⁶. In March 2010, Palin signed on to have her own television show on TLC called *Sarah Palin's Alaska*—5 million viewers tuned in to watch the show's premiere¹⁷. She was also a recurring pundit on Fox News, and until 2013 was on their payroll for an undisclosed amount of money. It is significant to note that Sarah Palin did not win the Vice

¹¹ "Rush Limbaugh Net Worth | Celebrity Net Worth." *Net Worth, Richest Rappers, Celebrities, Athletes, Salary and Houses*. Web. 6 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.celebritynetworth.com/richest-celebrities/rush-limbaugh-net-worth/#>>.

¹² Stetler, Brian. "A Lucrative Deal for Rush Limbaugh - NYTimes.com." *The New York Times - Breaking News, World News & Multimedia*. Web. 6 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/03>>

¹³ Lee, MJ. "Rush Limbaugh Blasted for 'slut' Comment" *POLITICO*. Web. 7 April 2012. <<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0312/73487.html>>

¹⁴ "Rush Limbaugh Ratings Up 60% Since Fluke Controversy." *Fox News Online*. Web. 7 April 2012. <<http://nation.foxnews.com/rush-limbaugh/2012/03/29/rush-limbaugh-ratings-60-fluke-controversy>>

¹⁵ "Sarah Palin Has Earned An Estimated \$12 Million Since July - ABC News." *ABCNews.com: Daily News, Breaking News and Video Broadcasts - ABC News*. Web. 6 Dec. 2011. <<http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/sarah-palin-earned-estimated-12-million-july/story?id=10352437>>.

¹⁶ "Sarah Palin Book Goes Platinum - CBS News." *Breaking News Headlines: Business, Entertainment & World News - CBS News*. Web. 6 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/12/01/print/main5851137.shtml>>.

¹⁷ "Sarah Palin's Alaska Breaks TLC Records." *The Hollywood Reporter*. Web. 6 Dec. 2011. <www.hollywoodreporter.com/blogs/live-feed/sarah-palins-alaska-breaks-tlc-45421>.

Presidency. Furthermore, in July 2009, she quit her job as the Governor of Alaska—she became a full time pundit and conservative superstar. Also like Limbaugh, Sarah Palin has come with her fair share of controversies. A recent HBO documentary based on the book Game Change by John Heilemann and Mark Halperin recalled Palin's 2008 road to the Vice Presidency, highlighting her surprising lack of knowledge of basic facts and simple but embarrassing media faux pas'.

Compared to these conservative figures, Rachel Maddow, who is MSNBC's most popular host, has a net worth of \$12.5 million. Compare this to Fox News' most popular host, Bill O'Reilly, who is worth \$50 million (400% of Maddow's net worth) with an annual salary of \$10 million from Fox News¹⁸. Jon Stewart, a known liberal famous for his satirical program *The Daily Show* that mocks traditional newscasts, is one of the most successful liberal figures today. He has a net worth of \$80 million with an annual salary of \$15 million¹⁹. *The Daily Show* has won sixteen Emmy awards, and draws in an average 1.8 million viewers nightly. Stewart is one of America's most successful and professionally recognized media figures, and yet his 1.8 million daily viewers cannot compare to Limbaugh's 3.5 million daily listeners²⁰.

It is clear from the compiled ratings and salary data that conservative-opinionated news is more heavily demanded than liberally opinionated news. The audiences of conservative programming are more active consumers of the media than the audiences for liberal programming. What is it about these two audiences that make them behave differently?

CHAPTER 2: WHO WATCHES PARTISAN NEWS

In their model of media effects, Shoemaker and Reese (1996) determine that there are two different layers of effects. On the media side, there are characteristics of the media itself that affect media content; on the audience side, there are characteristics of the audience members themselves that affect how they choose to use the media. In the context of partisan news, the supply-side of the news media industry have economic incentives to slant their news stories, which explains the partisanship of the programming. On the demand-side, however, there must be characteristics about the audiences that make them choose to consume partisan programming. We know that liberal news is demanded less than conservative news, so who is it that is demanding these news sources? And what about those audiences makes them consume differently?

¹⁸ "Bill O'Reilly Net Worth | Celebrity Net Worth." *Net Worth, Richest Rappers, Celebrities, Athletes, Salary and Houses*. Web. 6 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.celebritynetworth.com/richest-celebrities/bill-oreilly-net-worth/>>.

¹⁹ "Jon Stewart Net Worth | Celebrity Net Worth." *Net Worth, Richest Rappers, Celebrities, Athletes, Salary and Houses*. Web. 6 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.celebritynetworth.com/richest-celebrities/richest-comedians/jon-stewart-net-worth/>>.

²⁰ A difference between Stewart and Limbaugh however, which should be noted for control, is that a portion of Stewart's viewers tune in for the comedic aspect of the show. *The Daily Show* makes jokes by mocking journalism in general, not just conservatives. Rush Limbaugh, on the other hand, is narrower in his program content, promoting a conservative message on his show every day. Stewart should have a larger audience than Limbaugh because he has more aspects to his show, but he still gets fewer viewers than Limbaugh.

ANALYSIS OF ANES DATA

My analysis of the American National Election Survey data provided immense information detailing who watches liberal and conservative media, and how each of those groups breaks down by demographic. (For full methodology of the ANES analysis, see Appendix A.) To create the measures of liberal and conservative programming I took ANES questions that asked about viewership of specific shows and selected shows that I coded as “liberal” or “conservative” based on the publicly known ideological identification of the program host. My list of liberal shows consisted of *The Colbert Report*, *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, *Hardball with Chris Matthews*, *MSNBC Live*, and *The Rachel Maddow Show*. The conservative programs were: *Fox and Friends*, *Fox News*, *Hannity*, *The O’Reilly Factor*, *The Rush Limbaugh Show*, *The Sean Hannity Program*, *The Glenn Beck Program*, *The Savage Nation*, *The Mark Levin Show*, *The Neil Boortz Show*, and *The Laura Ingraham Show*. It is worth noting that of the programs ANES asks about, twice as many were coded as conservative than liberal. This could be because there were conservative radio programs in the conservative index in addition to television programs, while ANES did not measure consumption of liberal radio programs to be placed in the liberal index²¹. Someone who watched any one of the liberal programs went into the group of liberal media consumers, and someone who watched any one of the conservative programs went into the group of conservative media consumers. I created the partisan media variable (a sum of both groups: anyone who watched any partisan shows) as a means of comparison between the two groups²².

I observed the different media consumption groups (liberal, conservative and general partisan programming) by demographic traits that I believed would be insightful into who watches conservative and liberal media. In 2013 the Republican Party released The Growth and Opportunity Report in an effort to improve the party’s image. The report details the importance of different demographic groups and their role in the political and electoral process. For example, the report states, “Perception of the Party is at record lows. Young voters are increasingly rolling their eyes at what the Party represents, and many minorities wrongly think that Republicans do not like them or want them in the country.” Different demographics mentioned in the report include: age, race, ethnicity, region, ideology, gender, and sexual orientation. I looked at these variables and others as they are defined in ANES to observe how these demographics make up the base of liberal and conservative media consumers.

I first simply observed a comparison between liberal media consumers, conservative media consumers, general partisan news consumers, and the general ANES sample in each of the

²¹ Liberals generally tend to be less successful on the radio (Ladd 2012), so this is not a biased measure by ANES: there simply are not popular liberal radio programs.

²² I additionally analyzed those who watched both liberal and conservative media, but that group did not yield statistically significant results for any of the demographic variables.

demographic groups (see Appendix B) to look for any obvious trends. To analyze these comparisons more in depth, I used statistical analysis to find whether or not the relationship between these variables was statistically significant using chi-square tests. If the relationship was significant, I observed what within each variable contributed to that significance using standardized residuals. This type of analysis demonstrates if, given the distribution of the data, the observed distribution of the data is significantly different from the expected distribution of the data. For an added layer of context, I conducted an interview with a student who participated in both University of Michigan College Republicans and Students for Romney.

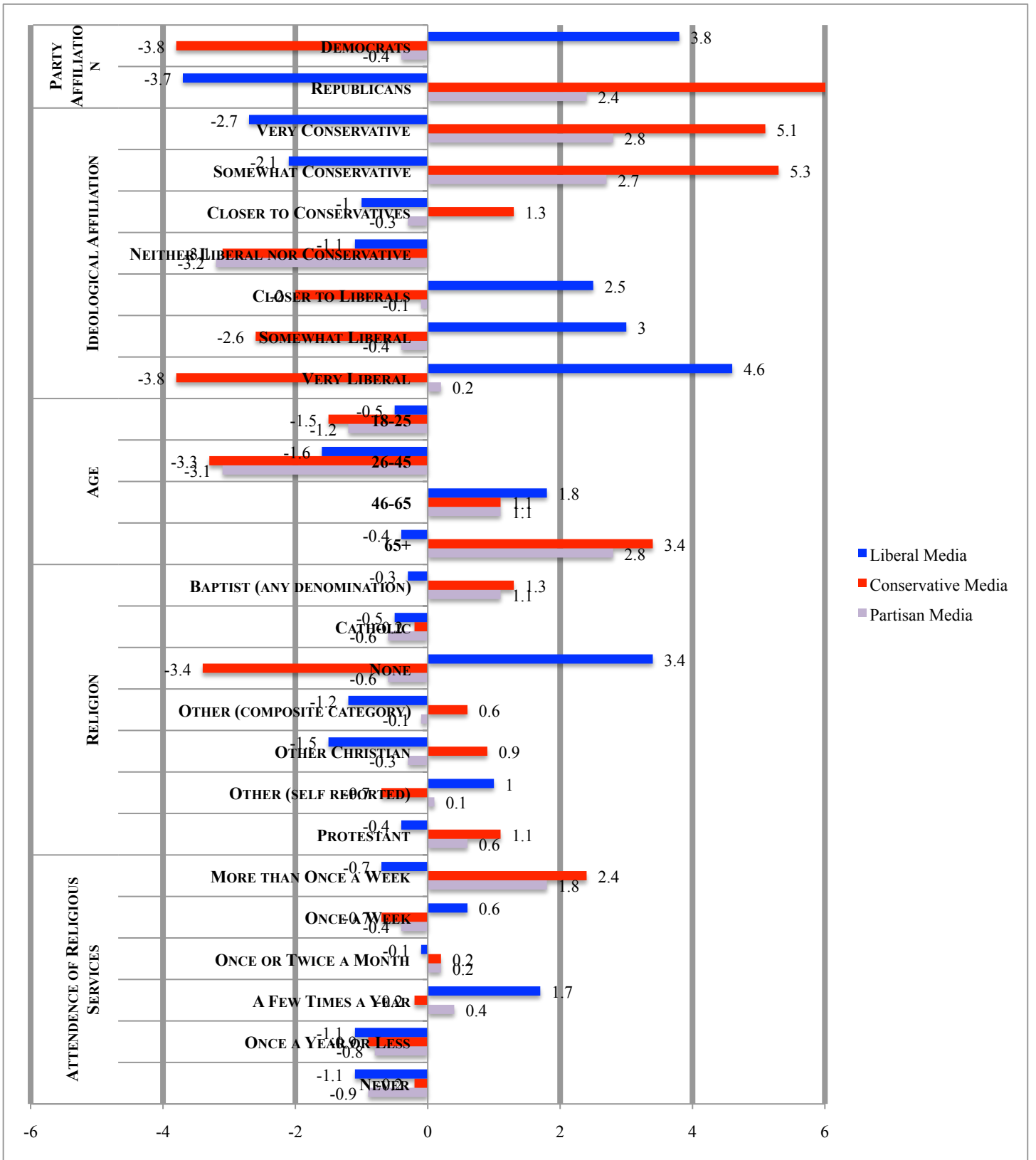


FIGURE 2: RESIDUAL RESULTS FOR CONSUMPTION BY DEMOGRAPHIC (RESIDUALS GREATER THAN 2 ARE STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT). FULL RESULTS WITH SPECIFIC VALUES ARE IN APPENDIX A.

Figure 2 demonstrates the residual results of the chi-square tests that look at the observed values from the ANES data compared to what would be expected given the distribution of values (an in-depth explanation of chi-square tests and residual values is in Appendix A). The particularly significant results were the relationship between media consumption and party affiliation, ideological identification, age and religion. (For full results reference Appendix C.)

For party affiliation, Democrats were observed to consume liberal media more than expected while Republicans consume liberal media less than statistically expected. Similarly, Democrats consume conservative media less than expected and Republicans consume conservative media more than expected. Overall, the results for the relationship between party affiliation and ideological media consumption confirm what one would assume: Democrats disproportionately consume liberal media while Republicans disproportionately consume conservative media. Of the two parties however, Republicans watch more partisan programming: 64.1% of those who identified as Republicans watch partisan programming compared to only 53.6% of Democrats.

A comparable relationship existed between liberal and conservative media and ideological identification. Those self-identifying as liberal watch liberal media more than expected while watching conservative media less than expected. Conservatives consume substantially more conservative media than expected while consuming less liberal media than statistically expected. Similar to political orientation, ideological orientation confirms what one would expect: those who identify on the liberal spectrum consume liberal media more than expected and those who identify on the conservative spectrum consume conservative media more than expected. It is interesting to note that those who identify as “neither liberal nor conservative” consume conservative and partisan programming less than expected.

The relationships between age and media consumption were largely driven by the oldest age group (65 and over) that consume conservative and partisan media more than expected, and the young adult/middle age group (26-45 years old), who consume conservative and partisan media less than expected. In my interview with the student from College Republicans, he noted that the Republican base doesn’t “have enough young people.” For the base of conservative media consumers, this sentiment is true.

Regarding religion I wanted to look at both the variable of which religion people identify with, along with how often they attend religious services, to obtain a full view of the religiosity of the groups who consume liberal, conservative, and partisan media. The issue of religion and the religious right came up extensively in my interview with the student from College Republicans who felt that the involvement of religion in the Republican Party was a deterrent for many moderate voters. He told me about his experience going to CPAC, the Conservative Political Action Conference, and how when he arrived he said, “there is this underlying assumption that you are Christian.” Social

conservatism is often times associated with conservative Christian values and recently those values have “painted a big picture of just intolerance in general.” This intolerance he noted, leads to Republicans being branded as hating “gays, black people and Hispanic people...it’s not direct,” he said, “but it’s implied.”

In the analysis of the ANES data, those who responded “none” to the religion question consume liberal media more than expected and conservative media less than expected. For frequency of attendance at religious services, those who attend services most often (“more than once a week”) consume conservative programming more than expected. Combining the significant relationship between conservative media consumers and attendance of religious services with the results that those who are not religious consume liberal media more than expected, the data suggests that those who are less religious are less likely to watch conservative programming, while those who are more religious are more likely to watch conservative programming.

Of these demographics, the most statistically compelling demographic trait to describe the viewers of conservative and liberal programming was ideological identification: that liberals consume liberal programming and conservatives consume conservative programming. While these results could have been expected, the ANES data concretely proves the patterns in viewership. Given that the most overwhelming pattern among the different bases of viewers is their ideologies, there must be something about the ideologies that makes them consume the media differently.

SELECTIVE EXPOSURE

These ANES results for ideological identification and partisan media consumption support the theory of selective exposure: that people who have certain opinions prefer to watch others with similar opinions. While my data analysis supports selective exposure theory, there is conflicting research on the evidence for selective exposure. Some researchers do not find strong evidence that viewers are biased in their news selections, (Freedman 1965; McGuire 1968; Zaller 1992; Kinder 2003) arguing that people’s information-seeking behavior is not as predisposed as we would expect. Other researchers however find that when looking for information people are especially prone to using their preexisting beliefs as a bias when selecting a news source (Klapper 1960, Jonas et al. 2005). My data aligns with the latter school of research.

Looking at how selective exposure plays in different mediums, Stroud (2008) observes habitual selective exposure and finds evidence to confirm that people do select their media based on their current beliefs, and that this pattern exists across media types (newspapers, talk radio, cable television, and the Internet.) Stroud finds that the effects of selective exposure are especially strong for viewers of cable news, and that these audiences became increasingly polarized during the coverage of the 2004 Presidential Election. Similarly Mutz (2001) observes selective exposure in terms of partisanship and political predispositions. She argues that as the number of news sources

increases and as people choose between these sources, the less diverse their sources of information are because people look for the same things. Ladd (2012) concurs that the more news sources there are, the more people will selectively expose.

Exposure decisions, in addition to general ideological outlooks, are also likely to be influenced by beliefs that are personally relevant (Donsbach 1991). For example, people prefer to read about politicians they like, and supporters of politicians are more inclined to read positive articles than negative articles, demonstrating selective exposure. Donsbach finds that a viewer's agreement or disagreement with a politician or a policy is a strong predictor of consumption.

My interview with a student in College Republicans provided more detail to the results regarding selective exposure. The student, who self-identified as a "conservative" on a very liberal-liberal-moderate-conservative-very conservative scale, noted that he preferred to watch political news from pundits who he agreed with on policy. "For someone who is more actively involved in politics," he said, they were more likely to watch someone "who you identify with politically." He specifically mentioned Glenn Beck as a controversial—or as some people have told him, "crazy"—figure whom he watched once and thought, "'I will watch your show again' because I agree with what he [Beck] was saying. For me, it is more about who I agree with."

Iyengar and Hahn (2009) note that the new media environment of information overload encourages selective exposure and this further polarizes the electorate. The new media environment makes it harder for companies to profit because with more media outlets the profits are more widely spread. Therefore outlets will play into the electorate's polarized media demands to make a profit and stay afloat. The media and its relation to partisanship in the public are cyclical because the public demands partisan news, which outlets supply to them in order to profit. That news then makes the public more partisan because the news reaffirms and perpetuates their beliefs.

All of this selectively exposed media consumption is significant because it affects mobilization and therefore voter turnout. Modern cognitive mobilization—when people are actually thinking about what they are doing rather than using shortcuts—is associated with increased political participation, discussion, information, and awareness (Inglehart 1990). Selective exposure affects what information people receive and affects their ability to mobilize (Benford and Snow 2000). Neumann (1986) considers a paradox between what we expect of citizens and what citizens actually do (whether or not, and how, they mobilize), as expressed through survey data. He notes that one of the solutions to this paradox is knowledge, stating that political interest and participation increase with knowledge. The mass media brings political knowledge to the average American and therefore contributes to an increase in participation and mobilization. Norris' (1996) research confirms Neumann's belief: Norris finds that television news leads to very high levels of political participation, knowledge and subjective efficacy. Newton (1999) also finds evidence to suggest that the mass

media mobilizes people due to increased information. Those who regularly read the newspaper were strongly associated with political mobilization, and those who watch large amounts of television also mobilize but to a lesser extent. Media choices are significant because what people watch informs them of certain information, affecting the overall knowledge that inspires mobilization.

The results of the ANES analysis suggest there is merit to the claims of selective exposure for partisan media. My interview echoed this sentiment:

I think for someone who is more actively involved in politics—like somebody who knows the issues—I think it is more who you identify with politically [that you watch for news]. But then for someone who is like a moderate voter—or someone who is an “independent”—who does not really know much about politics, if they do watch, it is like “oh it is because I like that person [and their personality].” But I would identify more with people I agree with.

The ANES data demonstrates that conservatives watch conservative programming while liberals watch liberal programming which is significant in terms of acquiring political knowledge.

Regardless, given the fact that the outlets that make up the conservative programming variable have more viewers, and that the viewers of conservative programming are conservative, we can conclude that more conservatives watch partisan media than liberals. So what is it about conservatives that make them more likely to watch partisan news media than liberals? This question becomes especially perplexing when looked at in the context of electoral data.

THE PARTISAN ELECTORATE

The way that Americans vote demonstrates that for voter turnout, liberals and conservatives mobilize equally. The 113th Congress’ Senate is 55% Democratic and 45% Republican, and its’ House of Representatives is 46% Democratic and 54% Republican: a relatively 50-50 split. As cited by McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal (2006), the increase in polarization along party lines has led to the equivalence of the terms “liberal” and “conservative” with “Democrat” and “Republican.” It is important to note that Americans relatively equally identify themselves as Democrat (31%) and Republican (29%)²³ but only half as many Americans identify as “liberal” (21%) than “conservative” (41%)²⁴. The two sides of the American political spectrum turn out equally in elections—hence why there is not a massive Republican majority. Despite equal levels of voter turnout, conservatives feel more strongly about self-identifying as “conservatives.” Those who vote Democratic, and are presumably relatively liberal (McCarty, Poole, Rosenthal 2006), do not feel as strongly about their ideological identification. This may be because there is a certain connotation that the word “liberal” holds that “conservative” does not. In the 1980’s “liberal” became a more-or-less bad word, and

²³ Jones, Jeffrey M.. " Democratic Party ID Drops in 2010, Tying 22-Year Low." *Gallup.Com - Daily News, Polls, Public Opinion on Government, Politics, Economics, Management*. Web. 6 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.gallup.com/poll/145463/democratic-party-drops-2010-tying-year-low.aspx>>.

²⁴ Saad, Lydia. " U.S. Political Ideology Stable With Conservatives Leading." *Gallup.Com - Daily News, Polls, Public Opinion on Government, Politics, Economics, Management*. Web. 6 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.gallup.com/poll/148745/political-ideology-stable-conservatives-leading.aspx>>.

Democrats recently have begun describing themselves as “progressive” rather than “liberal.” Regardless, there are a roughly equal amount of Americans who identify as Democrats and Republicans, so it is not true that, in terms of political ideologies, there are more conservatives than liberals; therefore we can discard this as an explanation for why conservatives consume more partisan media.

VOTING TRENDS OF DIFFERENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Voter turnout, like media consumption, plays out differently for different demographics of the American population. Going back to the 1976 election²⁵, around when the recent trend toward more polarization began, we see different voting trends among different demographics. (For charts of the data, see Appendix D.) Not surprisingly, Democrats tend to vote more Democratically while Republicans tend to vote for Republicans, and as expected, Independents’ voting trends align with the national averages²⁶. In terms of gender, women are more likely to vote Democratic and men tend to vote more Republican. By race, whites tend to vote Republican, while non-whites vote extremely more Democratic. For age, there are no significant long-run trends but recently, young people are slightly more likely to vote for Democrats than Republicans. By education level, less educated Americans are more likely to vote Democratic while those more educated tend to vote more often for Republicans²⁷. For Gallup’s data on religion (they only observe Protestants and Catholics), there are no significant trends. By region, the East votes more Democratically while the South votes more Republican, on average, while there are no significant trends for the West and Midwest.

The trends in which the general demographics vote are similar to the patterns in the ANES data regarding their media consumption. Why do they consume the media in different quantities?

CHAPTER 3: WHY IS THERE A DIFFERENCE IN CONSUMPTION?

Conservatives consume conservative news more than liberals consume liberal news; we know this from the ratings data in addition to the ANES analysis. The question of why this is, is especially confounding given that liberals and conservatives turn out to vote equally. So why are the consumption levels different?

A FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE

Literature suggests that there is something fundamentally different about those who identify as liberal and those who identify as conservative. These differences stem from psychological traits

²⁵ "Election Polls -- Presidential Vote by Groups." *Election Polls -- Presidential Vote by Groups*. Web. 10 Feb. 2013.

²⁶ The Gallup data did not consistently compile voting data regarding ideologies, but given polarization and the numbers for party identification and voting patterns, it is fair to assume that conservatives vote more Republican while liberals vote more Democratic.

²⁷ This may be attributed to the type of jobs and income that less educated people have versus the jobs and incomes that more-educated people have that are more consistent with Republican economic policies.

that affect outlook on interactions, policy, and the approach to information. Early in political psychological research, Conover and Feldman (1981) analyzed self-identified ideological labels and their importance to those who identify with the label. They find that ideological labels are powerful political symbols and that people attach meanings to these symbols. Of the meanings, liberals are seen as the image of change and progress while conservatives are more heavily associated with traditional values. Liberals and conservatives however are not bipolar or mutually exclusive because of different social and economic dimensions associated with different ideologies. For example, those who identify as liberal can have some beliefs consistent with those who identify as conservative, and vice-versa. The definitions of liberal and conservative are not black and white: there is immense gray area when incorporating economic and social aspects of policy. The lack of bipolarity therefore implies that those who self-identify as liberal do so for different reasons than those who self-identify as conservative. Conover and Feldman deduce that identifying as different ideologies requires different conceptual understandings—liberals and conservatives therefore are fundamentally different types of people.

Theories of psychological differences between conservatives and liberals focus on the dimensions of open-mindedness versus closed-mindedness. Much of previous research demonstrates that liberals tend to score higher individually on measures of openness, cognitive flexibility, and integrative complexity (Tetlock, 1983; Tetlock et al, 1985; Sidanius, 1985; Altemeyer, 1998). In addition, literature suggests that conservatives have stronger personal needs for order, structure, and decisiveness than liberals (Jost et al, 2003; Van Hiel, Pandelaere and Duritz, 2004; Kruglanski, 2005). Block and Block's (2006) longitudinal study demonstrates how these qualities that differentiate liberals from conservatives are already present when children are in nursery school. Preschool children who later identify as liberal were described by teachers as being self-reliant, energetic and impulsive, among other attributes; those later identifying as conservative were described as rigid, fearful and over-controlled. With a similar relation to fear, Hatemi et al (2013) find that people who are genetically inclined to be more fearful tend to be more conservative on specific issues like immigration. This does not imply that conservatives are more fearful, but rather that those who are more fearful tend to be conservative.

In a meta-analysis of political conservatism as motivated by social cognition, Jost et al (2003) find that the following psychological variables predict political conservatism: death anxiety, system instability, intolerance of ambiguity, a negative openness to experience, intolerance of uncertainty, need for structure, a negative outlook on integrative complexity, and a fear of threat and loss. Jost argues that political conservatism is based on two core components: resistance to change and an opposition to equality. These two components reduce uncertainty and threat, thus keeping the status

quo and maintaining the familiar. Jost et al (2007) continue to find evidence that suggests that one's need for certainty and managing threats contribute to conservative political ideologies.

Building on the existing literature, Carney et al (2008) assert that there are fundamental ideological differences between the left and the right that are rooted in their different psychological dispositions. Carney et al place the perceived personality traits of liberals and conservatives from previous literature on the "Big Five" model of personality dimensions (McCrae and Costa 1992) and determine that conservatives are more Conscientious while liberals are more Open to New Experiences²⁸. Conscientious in this context implies self-discipline and a preference for planned behavior. Openness implies appreciation for creativity and unconventional styles of thinking. Carney et al argue, "Ideology both reflects and reinforces individual differences in fundamental psychological needs, motives, and orientations toward the world." (Carney et al, page 808) In three different studies, Carney et al (2008) find that liberals score higher on Openness to Experience and lower on Conscientiousness, while conservatives score higher on Conscientiousness and lower on Openness to Experience. They conducted self-reported personality profiles, behavioral signatures, and an analysis of personal living and working spaces. The evidence found in Carney et al's (2008) study suggests that political orientation extends beyond politics and into aspects of individual personality and social interactions. Applying these findings, it would make sense that ideological orientation would extend to media usage.

USES AND GRATIFICATIONS

Given that liberals and conservatives are different, if these differences manifested themselves in media usage, we would expect consumption to be different. In regards to media usage, Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973) conceived the "uses and gratifications model" for why people use the media the way they do. They argue that there are many different reasons why people use the media, for example, knowledge or entertainment. There are five main components to their model:

1. The audience is active
2. The audience chooses their media and gratifications
3. The media competes with other sources of gratification
4. The audience could feasibly supply the same goals of the medium they are consuming
5. Audiences make their own judgments about the cultural significance of mass communication.

Different mediums (TV or radio, but in more modern times, TV or the internet) offer different attributes and exposure situations that can change the effects of use and gratification. Essentially, people have reasons to consume mass media and different qualities in the media and audience affect how the audience interprets the media.

²⁸ The other three personality traits of The Big Five are Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism. Carney et al find that these remaining traits are not applicable.

Applying the model to liberals and conservatives, we would assume that given their differences, we would see distinctive uses and gratifications for each group. Iyengar and Hahn's (2009) study demonstrates that ideological identities can indicate choice of outlets for soft news in addition to hard news, which could be indicative of the media manifestation of the psychological differences.

If it is true that liberals and conservatives are different based on these psychological traits—that conservatives are more conscientious and liberals are more open-minded—then we would expect to see this in their media consumption. More specifically, we would expect liberals to watch a more diverse set of programs from many media sources, while conservatives would watch fewer, more familiar programs from fewer media sources²⁹. The liberal desire for social change emphasizes their motivational needs for openness and creativity, which would inspire a more diverse consumption pattern. Liberals would consume less of one program or source in particular, and instead would consume a much more broad group of programs from many sources because of their open-mindedness and cognitive flexibility. Conservatives on the other hand prefer stability, emphasizing their need for order and structure, which would make conservatives prefer familiar programs and sources. Furthermore their attention to the status quo would make them especially attentive to liberal opinions in the press—or a liberal media bias. The desire to stay close to their own opinions combined with the popular belief of a liberal media bias limits conservatives to only several programs—and sources—that promote their vision of the status quo and do not pose a threat to conservative ideals. These different patterns of consumption for liberals and conservatives would explain the difference in the observed ratings data: conservatives' media consumption is more concentrated while liberals' consumption is more dispersed. Liberal consumption appears smaller than conservative consumption because it is harder to measure due to the expanse of programs and sources.

CHAPTER 4: LIBERALS, ALTERNATIVE MODES, AND DIVERSE CONSUMPTION

Based on liberals' psychological differences from conservatives, we would expect liberals to consume more alternative sources of media and different programs due to their openness to new ideas and their creativity in finding news. These alternative sources of news and the vast possible programs that liberals could consume are less easily quantifiable and therefore would explain the discrepancy between liberals' and conservatives' consumption of partisan media. While television and radio

²⁹ A program refers to a show while a source refers to the type of medium the program is in. The Rachel Maddow Show is a program, and its' source is the television. The Rush Limbaugh Show is a program and its' source is the radio. Networks (Fox News, MSNBC) are comprised on programs.

programs are easier to track through ratings, articles or videos on the Internet prove more difficult. For example the ANES data I analyzed for the composite variables of liberal and conservative programming only consisted of radio and television programs because ANES did not ask about the consumption of news from specific programs from alternative sources like Internet sites or magazines.

ALTERNATIVE SOURCES

Literature suggests that liberals are more prone to using the Internet than conservatives. In research of early Internet usage from the 2001 and 2002 General Social Survey, Hindman (2009) finds that liberals are more likely to visit political websites than moderates or conservatives. These political websites do not only include online news but also government websites and other relevant online political activities. Hindman also finds that twice as many liberals than conservatives are in the highest category of Internet usage. Applying the ideologies to the parties, Chait (2007) discusses Democratic online organizing after the 2000 election and the Florida recount. The recount was seen as the turning point for liberal complacency and it formed “netroots,” an online community of liberals who wanted to toughen up the partisan approach. Netroots activists saw the Internet as an outlet to reform the Democratic Party in a way that could not be achieved offline. Netroots, as opposed to regular liberal bloggers, are more associated with activism: volunteering and fundraising for Democratic candidates. They work on messaging, attempting to parallel non-news media outlets like talk-radio. Netroots activists are united by their desire to replicate the conservative movement of the 1960’s and 1970’s, and move the Democratic Party towards more progressive platforms. But the netroots have a stronger desire to be like the New Right than the New Left: “if there is a single thing that the netroots admires most about the right, it is its philosophical and political unity.” (Chait, page 21) Netroots have close ties among one another, which strengthens their bond and message. Additionally the comments section of the blogs, Chait says, are partisan in nature which brings in a sense of selective commenting similar to theories of selective exposure.

Chait discusses Jerome Armstrong and Markos Moulitsas’ writings and theories as “the closest thing to a manifesto of the netroots movement.” Armstrong, “The Blogfather,” started a website called MyDueDilligence that became a source of activism for Howard Dean supporters in his 2004 presidential bid. Moulitsas started DailyKos, which took in MyDueDilligence, and gets millions of visits daily (Bai 2007). Together Armstrong and Moulitsas wrote a book, *Crashing the Gate*, which describes the alternative forms of mobilization of the liberal political movement after George W. Bush’s election to president. They note the “nondemocratic means” by which Bush was elected and the lack of action by the political left that ignited a new generation of liberal activists coming together on the Internet. The era of blogs and liberal blogging, Armstrong and Moulitsas claim, began with the infamous 2000 recount as liberals harnessed a new medium to initiate a liberal movement. The

Democratic Party, they say, lacks a brand and a vision which online grassroots mobilization can remedy. While the Republican Party is cohesive, the Democrats are divided into many single-issue groups (pro-choice, gun control, environmental issues, etc.) that do not successfully come together for the success of the party. Armstrong and Moulitsas fundamentally believe that the Internet and blogosphere is the environment to bring these ideas together to create a discussion among liberals so that the Democratic Party can return as the party of the people.

While Democrats have worked to harness the Internet, there are some sentiments that the Republicans have not succeeded in capturing this medium in the same way. In my interview with a student in College Republicans, he reflected on the role of the Internet in the 2012 Presidential election:

The Internet is not helping Republicans at all. Republicans are falling behind very fast and I think it's because the Republicans don't have enough young people. And I think that's a cyclical thing: they aren't recruiting young people so they don't know how to use technology, and because they don't know how to use technology, they're not recruiting young people.

Armstrong and Moulitsas looked to take the advantage of the Internet for Democrats, and undoubtedly the youth of the Democratic Party helped in this regard. The student I interviewed recognized the potential generational gap of the Internet, saying, “the Republicans are trying but they're not there yet. It's like when your parents are trying to figure out how to use technology. It's like when my mom tries to use Facebook—I learned that six years ago.”

ANALYSIS OF ANES DATA: SOURCES AND PROGRAMS

Given this literature, we would assume that liberals are more likely to get their news from the Internet than conservatives, which would explain the previous discrepancy in the numbers from Chapter 2. To quantify liberals' use of alternative sources and programs, I analyzed different ANES questions, and cross-tabulated them against ideological identification (liberal-conservative). For the sources of news, I looked at ANES' questions regarding getting political news from different sources (radio, Internet news sites, paper newspapers, magazines, TV, and Internet blogs) and for the programs I chose non-partisan programs (programs from ABC, CBS, NBC; CNN; and NPR) to cross-tabulate against ideologies. I then looked at the chi-square values and corresponding residuals (See Appendix A for full methodology.)

SOURCES

Figure 3 displays the residual results for the ANES questions related to media sources. Conservatives were more likely than expected to get information from the radio while liberals were more likely than expected to get their information from Internet news sites. (For the full analysis, see Appendix E.)

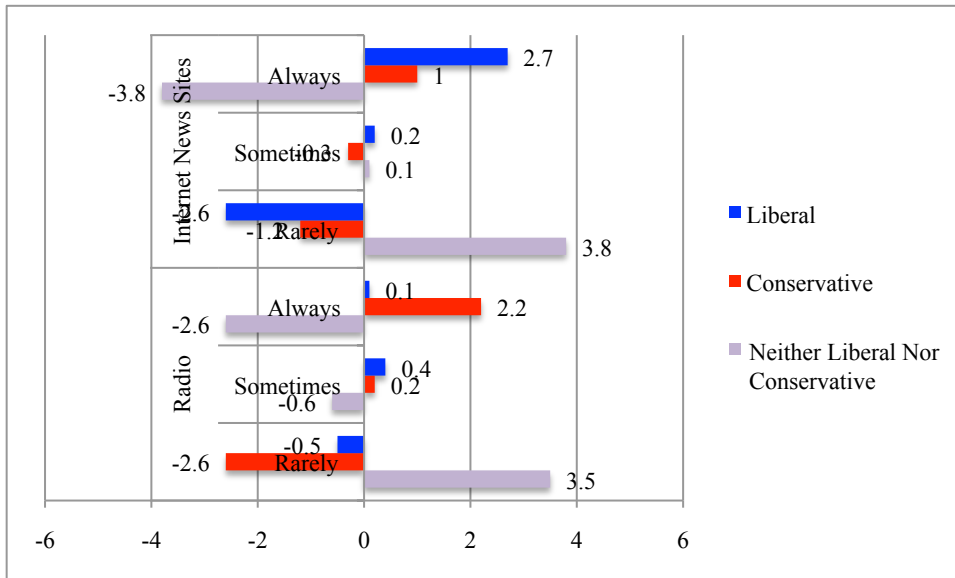


FIGURE 3: RESIDUAL RESULTS FOR SOURCE CONSUMPTION BY IDEOLOGICAL IDENTIFICATION (RESIDUALS GREATER THAN 2 ARE STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT)

Conservatives’ consumption of radio and television as sources was also present in the ANES results from Chapter 2 because radio and television programs were part of the composite measure of conservative programming. Not included in the composite measures from Chapter 2 are Internet news sites, which the ANES data here shows liberals consume more than statistically expected. The ANES data on news sources implies that while liberals may watch shows on MSNBC less—for example—they are more likely to get their news from MSNBC.com. Furthermore conservatives disproportionately consume the sources that made up the measures of liberal and conservative media from the ANES data in Chapter 2.

One might object to this measure and note that the Internet and radio tend to be generational news sources: young people are more likely to use the Internet and older people are more likely to get their information from the radio. When controlling for age for these variables however, the results did not yield any statistically significant results. Said plainly, it is not just old conservatives that listen to the radio or young liberals that use the Internet. Conservatives generally, controlling for age, are more likely to get their information from the radio, and respectively the same for liberals and the Internet. We can therefore conclude that the uses of these media sources are not generational.

PROGRAMS

To assess the consumption of alternative news programs, I looked at programs considered to be neutral: the networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC), NPR, and CNN (See Appendices A for full methodology and F for full results). Figure 4 presents the results of the residuals for the ANES questions regarding programs. The data for the networks—looking at ABC, CBS, and NBC’s nightly news programs—proved to be insignificant. CNN and NPR however have a statistically significant

higher amount of liberal consumers than expected. For CNN, liberals watch more than expected and conservatives listen less than expected.

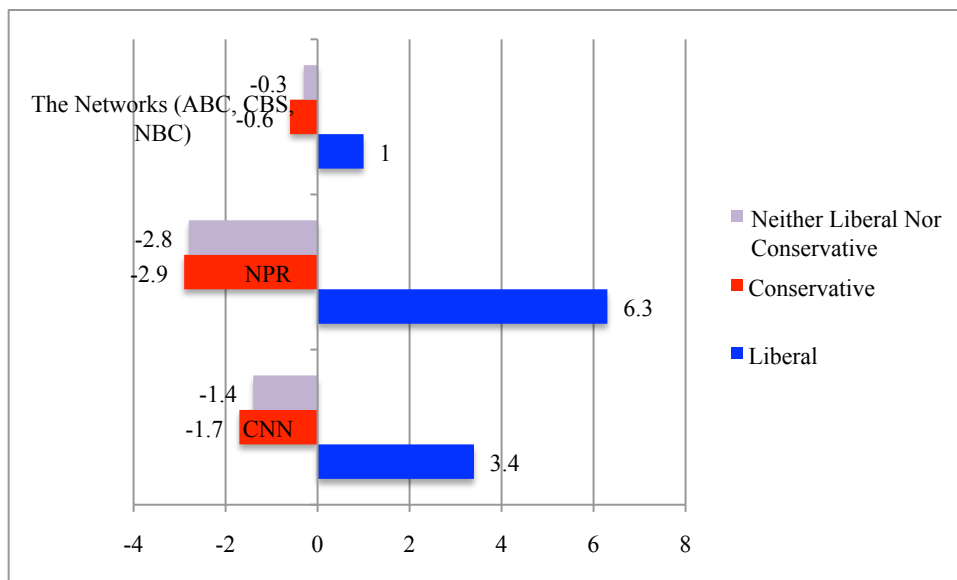


FIGURE 4: RESIDUAL RESULTS FOR PROGRAM CONSUMPTION BY IDEOLOGICAL IDENTIFICATION (RESIDUALS GREATER THAN 2 ARE STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT)

These results indicate that liberals go to alternative programs to get their news, reaching not just to liberal programs, but to moderate ones as well. Combined with the data on liberals using alternative sources, we can conclude that liberals, although seemingly consuming less media than conservatives, actually consume media that is harder to measure with existing data sources. The way that liberals consume the media is both vast in terms of program choices and harder to quantify with source data, like ratings. Liberals use a more diverse approach to media consumption, which confirms what would be expected given the psychological dispositions.

CHAPTER 5: CONSERVATIVES, MEDIA BIAS, AND NARROW CONSUMPTION

The psychological differences between liberals and conservatives would lead us to expect that conservatives would consume more mainstream political news and less alternative programs and sources. We would furthermore expect conservatives to consume more partisan news generally as opposed to moderate news because of their cognitive dislike for uncertainty and unpredictability. These claims were confirmed by the ANES analysis of programs and sources done in Chapter 4 (See Figures 3 and 4). However given the psychological traits of conservatives established in the literature we would also expect conservatives to raise more issues of bias in the media because of their concentration on the status quo. The idea of a liberal media bias establishes how conservatives feel a threat regarding the mainstream media. This threat would force conservatives to avoid other programs

and sources and flock to those that are more familiar, thereby creating a feedback loop that maintains their status quo of ideas and opinions. That concentration of consumption would therefore equate to the appearance of more highly watched conservative programs.

CONSERVATIVE DISTRUST IN THE MEDIA

From the ANES data analysis we know that conservatives watch conservative programming and are more likely to listen to the radio than statistically expected. We also know from ratings data that they tune in to these programs more so than their liberal counterparts. Unfortunately however, ANES does not ask about media bias or media intentions, so I was unable to analyze any data against ideological identification. Gallup, however, tests media trust (or distrust) and perceived bias.

A 2012 Gallup poll³⁰ demonstrated that overall distrust in the media reached an all-time high with 60% of those polled saying they have little or no trust in the media to report the news “fully, accurately, and fairly.” Broken down by party, 58% of Democrats say they did trust the media, compared to only 31% of Independents and 26% of Republicans.

In September 2011, Gallup asked about media bias³¹ and found that 55% of Americans have “not very much/none at all” trust in the media. Additionally, 47% of those polled thought that the news media was too liberal, 36% thought it was just right, and 13% thought it was too conservative. Of the respondents, 75% of Republicans polled thought the news media was too liberal, compared to 20% of Democrats, while 57% of Democrats thought the news media was “just right,” versus only 20% of Republicans.

A Pew Research Center for the People and Press poll from 2012 demonstrated that Republicans say they trust the media only half as often as Democrats³². The overall survey data from Gallup and Pew suggests that Republicans are more likely to voice distrust in the media than Democrats. Given the polarization equitability of ideological labels to parties, conservatives therefore distrust the media more than liberals. Similar to this data there has been a substantial amount of research on the subject of the liberal media bias and there are conflicting views in the literature as to whether the bias does or does not exist.

MacCoun and Paletz (2009) conducted an experiment using random digit dialing to see how ordinary citizens react to policy-related research findings. They gave respondents a description of a hypothetical study on four different politicized topics (gun control, death penalty, medical marijuana, and school vouchers) and one control topic (nutrition) and asked subjects for their reactions to the

³⁰“U.S. Distrust in Media Hits New High.” *U.S. Distrust in Media Hits New High*. Web. 10 Feb. 2013.

³¹“Majority in U.S. Continues to Distrust the Media, Perceive Bias.” *Majority in U.S. Continues to Distrust the Media, Perceive Bias*. Web. 10 Feb. 2013.

³²“Further Decline in Credibility Ratings for Most News Organizations.” *Pew Research Center for the People and the Press RSS*. Web. 11 Feb. 2013.

study's main findings. As expected, subjects were much more skeptical of findings that were contrary to their beliefs. Subjects that were conservative however, were more likely to attribute studies with liberal findings to the liberalism of the researchers while in contrast, subjects who identified as liberal did not attribute conservative findings to the conservatism of the researcher.

My interviewee also spoke to conservative distrust in the media and this conservative consumption centered around Fox News, saying, "Fox [News] is the biggest watched because it's the only media outlet that Republicans trust to tell the truth."

ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE LIBERAL MEDIA BIAS

Despite conservative distrust of the media, there is literature to suggest that a liberal media bias does not exist. Domke et al (1999) asks what factors lead conservatives to claim a liberal media bias and the extent to which conservatives claim favoritism in the media. Through analysis of candidate poll standings and news content in 1988, 1992, and 1996, they find evidence to support that when Republican candidates are down in the polls, there are more claims of a liberal media bias. Furthermore, they find that the claims are strategically made around the Democratic conventions to shift the media's message away from the convention. Their data implicitly refutes the idea of the liberal media bias because it demonstrates the strategic timing of the claims as opposed to a consistent belief in the bias.

While Domke et al use quantitative evidence to reject the liberal media bias, others use qualitative facts to refute claims of the bias. McChesney (2004) also reviews the conservative critique of the liberal media bias, with four major points against the claim. First, he notes that it is the media owners, not the journalists, who decide what makes the news. The liberal media bias assumes that reporters have the power to decide for themselves what is in the news, but this is not true—media owners and advertisers drive content and are much more conservative and pro-business than journalists. Second, the liberal media bias assumes that all journalists are politically liberal: McChesney cites that 92% of journalists voted for Bill Clinton. However even if journalists are liberal, that does not equate to bias. Journalism is a sophisticated, white-collar profession that requires extensive education, so liberal means something different in this context than in the political context. Furthermore, if journalists are so liberal, McChesney asks, why is there still so much stereotyping (racial overrepresentation of crime and underrepresentation of achievements; exaggerated portrayals of gender roles) in the media? McChesney's third point is that if journalists were abusing their power to push a liberal agenda, they would be breaking their professional code, and there is no evidence to suggest that this is true. Finally, McChesney notes that the suggested remedy to a liberal media bias would be journalism more sympathetic to the conservative perspective which would not be a remedy at all.

Alterman (2003) concurs with McChesney's first point that the structure of the mass media business is actually more privy to conservative ideals, which are more likely to influence the news and a political agenda. In his book, Alterman—like Domke et al— argues that claims of a liberal media bias are strategic ploys by conservatives to keep liberal views on the defensive in public discourse to devalue the quality of the liberal message. He notes that conservatives' continued expression of a liberal media bias reinforces the idea and keeps the sentiment strong.

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF THE LIBERAL MEDIA BIAS

Despite some literature suggesting otherwise, conservatives continue to believe in this bias and therefore avoid sources that are not sympathetic to their beliefs. Groeclose and Milyo (2005) find evidence to support the liberal media bias. They computed the ideologies of media outlets by counting the number of times that they cite certain think tanks and policy groups, and compared that to the number of times that members of Congress (who belong to parties) cite those same groups. Their data suggested that there was a liberal bias in every media source they tested with the exception of *Fox News Special Report* and *the Washington Times*.

In my interview with the student from College Republicans he too expressed his belief of bias in the news media. He asserted, “With other news programs I can see the bias. I can see the bias on Fox News too, but I guess I'm more comfortable with the bias because I'm used to it. I understand it and I can see it, but I don't like being angry at the TV.” He put the liberal media bias in the context that liberals discuss the inherent bias in Fox News:

“Democrats always say, ‘oh you have this super channel [Fox News],’ and Republicans just think, ‘you have every other channel.’ Every other channel pretty much counts as a Democratic channel. Democrats can say ‘oh I'll watch MSNBC, or I'll watch CNN,’ but if you're a Republican, you don't watch those channels. Those channels are all liberal biased.”

The literature speaks to this point as well. Iyengar and Hahn (2009) look very specifically at the demand for news and the affinity of the news organization to the consumers' preferences. They find that news outlet labels are a significant cue for consumers, implying that news outlets—and therefore the news they produce—act as brands to media consumers and aid in their decision-making process. Iyengar and Hahn demonstrate that Republicans prefer to read reports from Fox News and tend to avoid news from CNN and NPR: Democrats equally consumed CNN and NPR, and avoided Fox News. They furthermore found that Republicans and Democrats look to these sources for not just hard news like politics or race relations, but also soft news, like sports and travel. Iyengar and Hahn's findings imply that ideological identities and political affiliations manifest themselves in the media, not just in terms of politics and the news media but also in general knowledge acquisition and learning. The polarization of soft news demonstrates a cultural aspect to media consumption on par with the psychological traits discussed in Chapter 3. More engaged partisan viewers strengthened these effects: for example those who identified as strong Republicans were even more likely to

choose Fox News. Iyengar and Hahn (2009) note in their conclusions that while Republicans converged on Fox News as a single source of news, Democrats divided their consumption among different outlets (CNN and NPR), which concurs with my findings from Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTISAN MEDIA AND POLITICS

Given all the data analysis, there is substantial evidence to suggest the claim that liberals and conservatives are indeed different in their consumption of partisan media. Liberals are more open-minded in their uses and gratifications of the media, as seen by their increased likelihood to get their political news through more vast sources, like the Internet, in addition to television and print, and from a diverse group of programs like CNN and NPR in addition to typical liberal programs. Conservatives, on the other hand, are more prone to maintain the status quo and therefore watch fewer programs from more familiar sources such as the radio and television. While the outlets that conservatives use to get their news are more easily quantifiable—it is easier to obtain ratings data from concrete sources like the radio and television—the Internet, which the data suggests liberals use more, is harder to track. From existing data sources, the discrepancy that arises from the different characteristics of the sources provides the illusion that conservatives consume more partisan media than their liberal counterparts. However because there are no specific numbers for the Internet, it is harder to determine how much partisan news liberals actually consume. The programs that are tangible to count, that ANES compiles data for, and that I created a composite measure of partisan programming with (see Chapter 2), overestimate conservative consumption because they disproportionately contain sources that conservatives are more likely to use for their media consumption. Furthermore, fewer, more concentrated sources are more easily quantifiable than a vast expanse of different news organizations.

The data provides an explanation to the question initially asked in this thesis: liberals and conservatives consume partisan media differently because of their fundamental psychological differences. Their media use reflects personality traits established in previous literature that liberals are more open-minded, creative and curious, while conservatives are more orderly and conventional. These traits establish different wants and needs in general, and therefore different uses and gratifications in the media. The reflection of ideological personality traits in media usage implies the deep immersion of ideological identification and the greater significance of how ideologies extend beyond policy and political opinions.

With the established differences between liberals and conservatives and their media usage, there are interesting ideas for future research. One thing that particularly struck me while performing my literature review on polarization and the effects of partisan media was the discrepancy in the

research on conservatism and conservative media outlets like Fox News, to research liberalism and liberal media. I mention in a footnote in Chapter 1 that there was a lack of literature on liberalism. My thesis looks at the discrepancy between conservatives and liberals' behavior—it would be interesting to look at the discrepancy between research on conservatives and liberals' behavior. Are there motivational factors within higher education and research institutions that favor researching conservatives more so than liberals? Does this have to do with the ideologies of the researchers: are they more Conscientious or Open Minded? Is there a liberal bias in the research community?

For continuing areas of study related to this research, my ANES data suggests that liberals use the Internet more than conservatives. But we do not know if they use the Internet similarly and liberals just use it more, or if they use it differently in general. An in-depth analysis of Internet usage by liberals and conservatives would have implications for the future of the ideologies and the two parties because with the declining use of print news in favor of the Internet, the Internet is the future of news. If liberals use the Internet in a different way than conservatives do then it has immense ramifications for the way that liberals and conservatives obtain knowledge of current policies and events.

The increasing importance of the Internet generally has implications for the ideological differences of media consumption. Social media and mobile communication have had substantial roles in campaigns since the 2008 general election. Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites, have become commonplace campaign tools to reach voters and inspire mobilization. Different usage of these outlets would both create different ways campaigns are communicated, and different ways that that communication is both consumed and understood. Republican candidates may use Facebook in a different way than Democratic candidates, and Republican audiences may interpret and use Facebook in a different way than Democratic audiences. The effects on moderates, or those who identify as neither liberal nor conservative, would be significant for election outcomes depending on how that group uses the Internet in comparison to the partisans.

Overall the data has considerable implications for both the media and political industries. The evidence for selective exposure combined with the personality traits that determine consumption have interesting connotations for how the media industry should market their news programs to attract viewers of each ideology. Furthermore, while the data did not prove the existence of a liberal media bias, it explains why conservatives are more likely to allege the bias: when the media suggests disturbing the status quo, it appears liberal. The media, as the intermediary between the public and its elected officials, determines how the public sees policy and events. How the media explains events in order to gain viewers with these different personalities therefore affects politicians and the policies they create. The interconnectivity between elected officials, the media, and the public can be completely changed by appeals to different ideologies for viewership and votes. The fundamental

differences between liberals and conservatives have the potential to influence the political and media landscapes of the American electorate.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ANES ANALYSIS

My analysis consisted of data from the March 2012 American National Election Survey (ANES) Evaluations of Government and Society Study. The study was released on March 27, 2012 and is the most recent ANES data set to date. There were 1,253 respondents after removing those who did not finish the survey. ANES compiles data regarding the American electorate and their opinions on: social and religious characteristics, partisanship and evaluation of political parties, ideological self-identification, public opinion on policy issues, support for the political system, political involvement and participation in politics, evaluation of the Presidential candidates, evaluation of Congressional candidates, and vote choice (ANES Guide). The main variables that I focused on were those regarding the media—consumption of conservative and liberal programming and types of programming—and those regarding demographics—ideology, party affiliation, age, religion, etc.

The first step in the analysis of my data was to read through all the questions available and selected the relevant questions for analysis. For the variables of media consumption, I created some composite variables to simplify analysis. The ANES questions regarding specific media programs asked, “Which of these do you watch at least once a month?” Of the 41 programs they gauge viewership of, I selected 11 programs that I coded as conservative based on knowledge of the hosts or pundits who frequent the programs, and 5 I coded as liberal with the same criteria.

Conservative Programs

Fox and Friends
Fox News
Hannity
The O’Reilly Factor
The Rush Limbaugh Show
The Sean Hannity Show
The Glenn Beck Program
The Savage Nation
The Mark Levin Show
The Neil Boortz Show
The Laura Ingraham Show

Liberal Programs

The Colbert Report
The Daily Show with Jon
Stewart
Hardball with Chris Matthews
MSNBC Live
The Rachel Maddow Show

Other ANES Programs

20/20
60 Minutes
ABC World News
Anderson Cooper 360
CBS Evening News
CNN Newsroom/Headline News
Dateline
Early Show
Face the Nation
Good Morning America
NBC Nightly News
PBS News Hour
Piers Morgan Tonight
The Situation Room
This Week
Today
Tonight Show with Jay Leno
Morning Edition (NPR)
All Things Considered (NPR)
Fresh Air (NPR)

ANES asks if the respondents have watched the program at all in the past month, so I created a composite measure for conservative, liberal, and partisan programming in general. I then recoded this onto a binary scale of “yes” and “no” to observe the groups of people who consume any sort of this programming, regardless of how much. The variable of partisan programming was anyone who watched both conservative and liberal programming, so any of the 16 programs above.

I later created composite variables to describe the “networks” which combined ABC, NBC, and CBS’s evening news programs; “CNN” which combined the programs on CNN; and “NPR” which combined the NPR programs.

To further look at the media in the ANES data, I observed the results of questions asking about different media sources. The ANES question for the sources was “how often do you get information about politics from each of the following: radio, Internet news sites, paper newspapers, TV, magazines, Internet blogs.” For ease of analysis I recoded the answers to these questions: “never” and “less than once a month” equated to “rarely,” “1-3 times a month” and “almost every week” were “sometimes,” and “3 times or more a week” and “every day” were recoded to “always.”

In addition to the media variables I analyzed the following demographic variables:

Demographics

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

“When it comes to politics, would you describe yourself as liberal, conservative, or neither liberal nor conservative?”

“Age”

“Education (Categorical)”

“Race/Ethnicity”

“Household Size”

“Household Income”

“Region- Based on State of Residence”

“What is your religion?”

“How often do you attend religious services?”

To analyze the relationship between the variables, I used chi-square tests because the variables I was observing were nominal—the data was not numerical. Chi-square tests³³ measure whether two groups in a sample are significantly different for a given attribute. It tests the null hypothesis, which predicts that the observed distribution of the sample will closely resemble the expected distribution of a sample. When comparing the observed values to the predicted values, if the Pearson Chi-Square statistic, is less than 0.05, the relationship between the two variables is statistically significant.

Standardized residuals³⁴ emphasize the major components that led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Plainly, residuals help determine which of the categories within the variables of the chi-square test were significant contributors to the difference between the observed and expected values. They show which of the inputs of the variables were over or under emphasized in the observed sample than what we would have expected from a normal distribution. If the absolute value of the residual is greater than two, then we can conclude that that attribute was a significant influence on the chi-square test statistic.

In analyzing my data in SPSS I had to adjust the data to remove the “no answer” or “refused” responses because the low values threw off my SPSS outputs for expected values for the chi-square residuals.

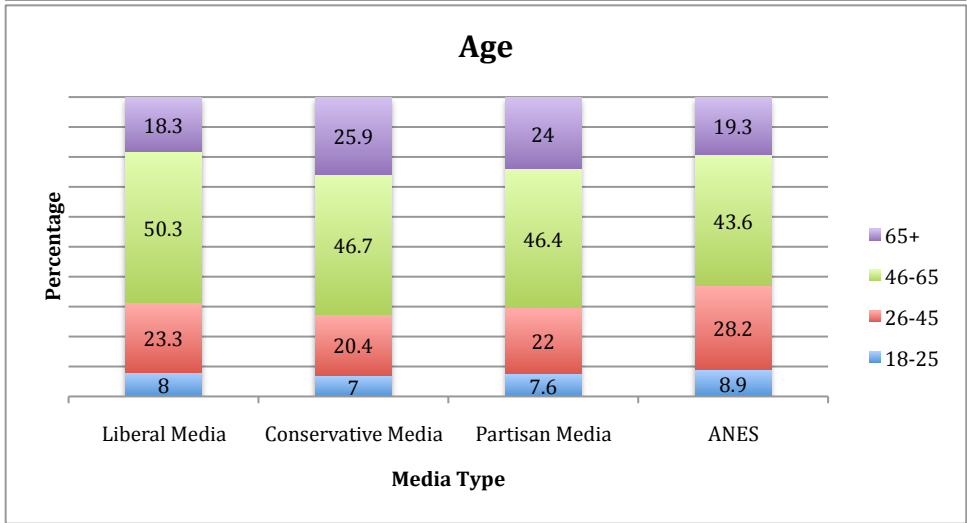
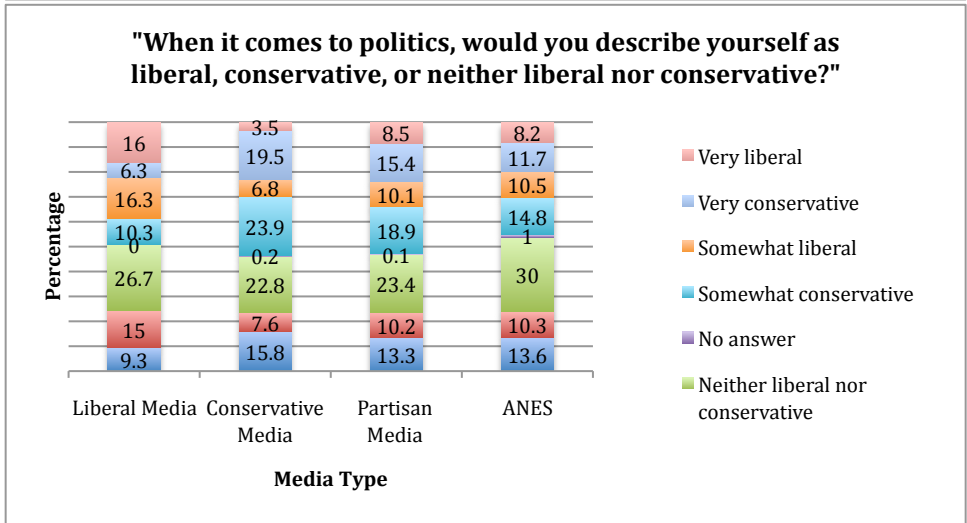
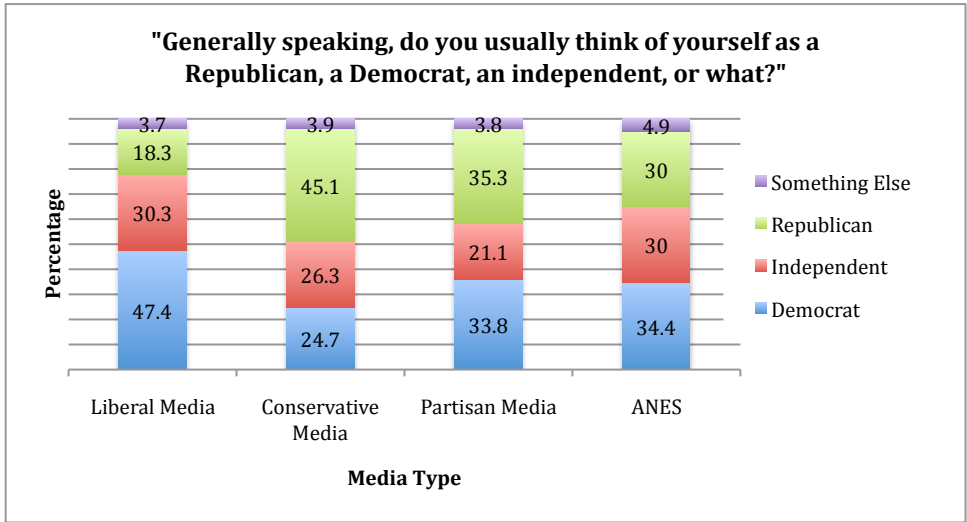
APPENDIX B: WHO CONSUMES LIBERAL, CONSERVATIVE, AND PARTISAN MEDIA?

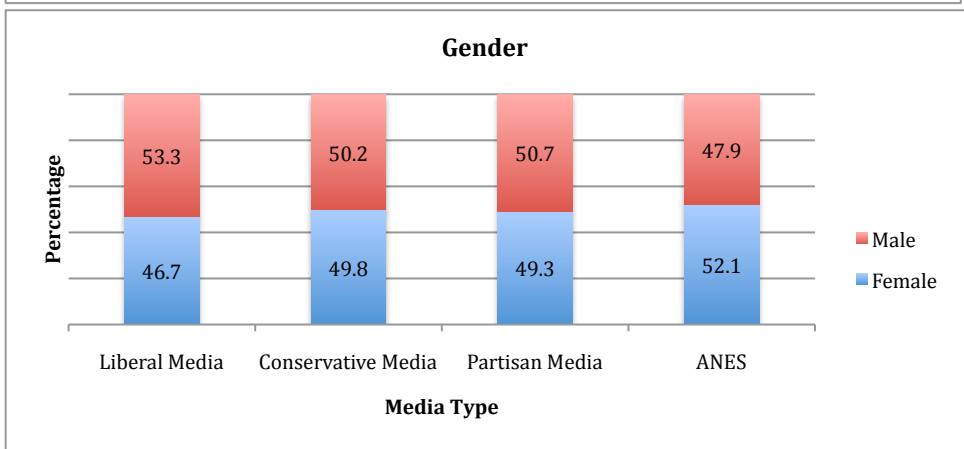
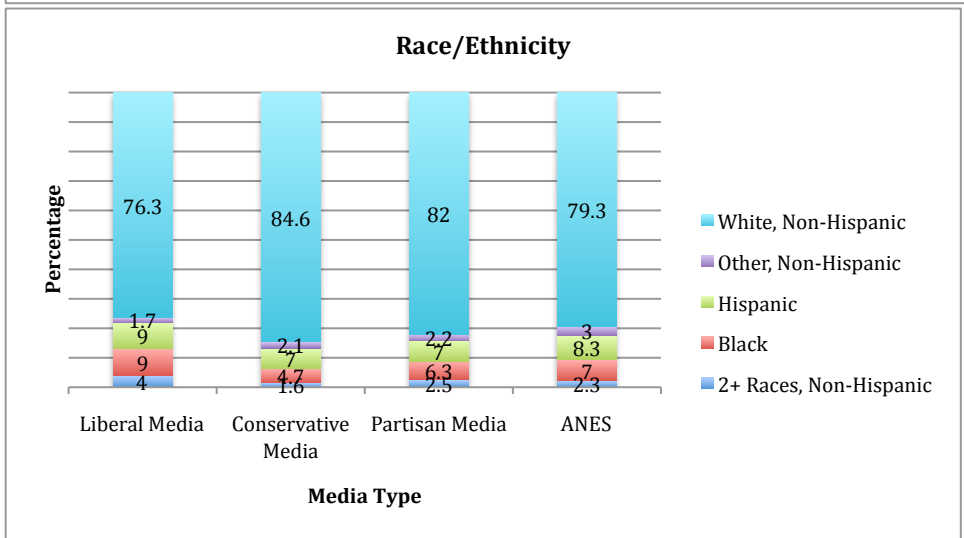
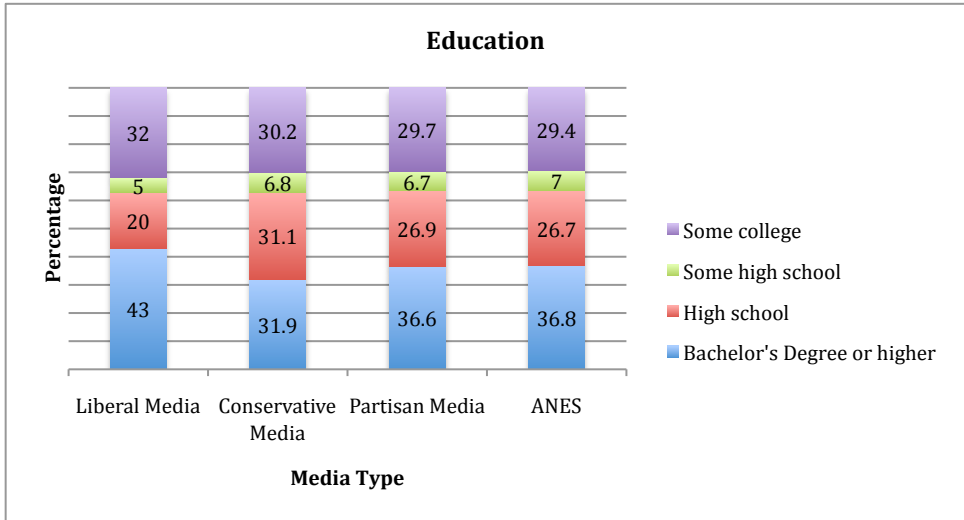
In order to look at each individual group of media consumers, I wanted to look at these groups of consumers next to one another, and then compared to the general ANES sample. Each of the following charts has the frequencies as a percentage of the whole sample for each group for those who watch liberal programming (Liberal Media), conservative programming (Conservative Media), partisan programming in general (Partisan Media), and then the total ANES sample (ANES). The

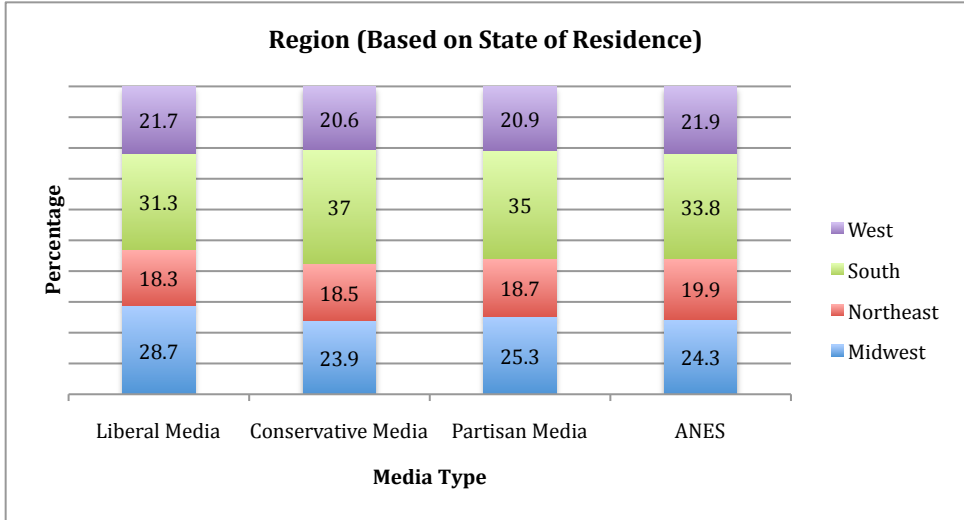
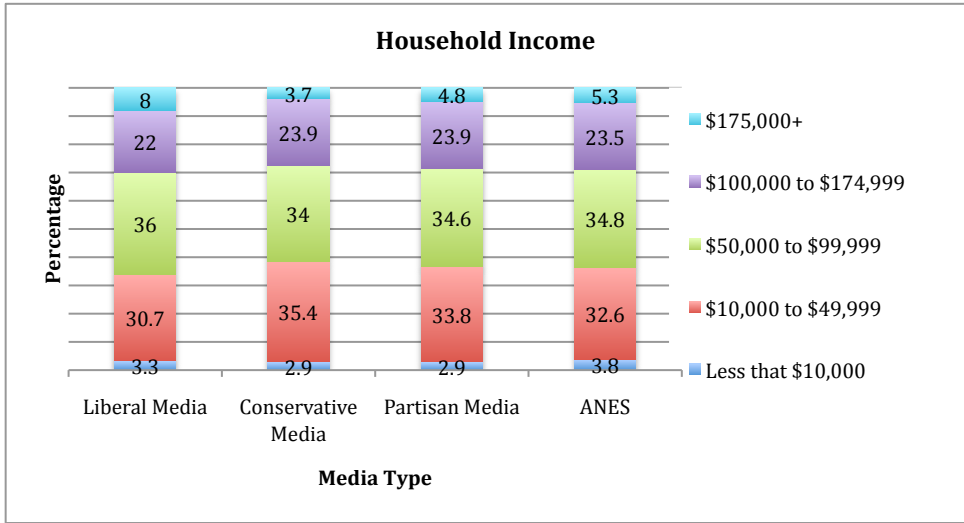
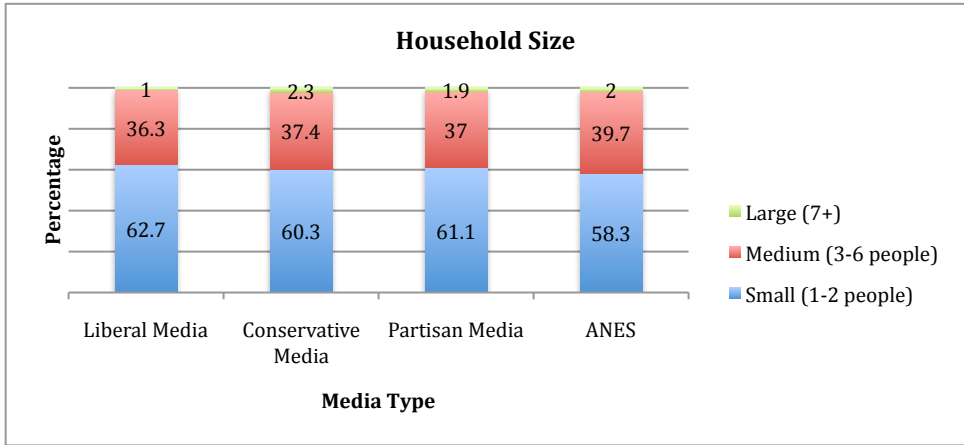
³³ Dodge, Yadolah. *Chi-Square Test*. New York: Springer, 2008. Print

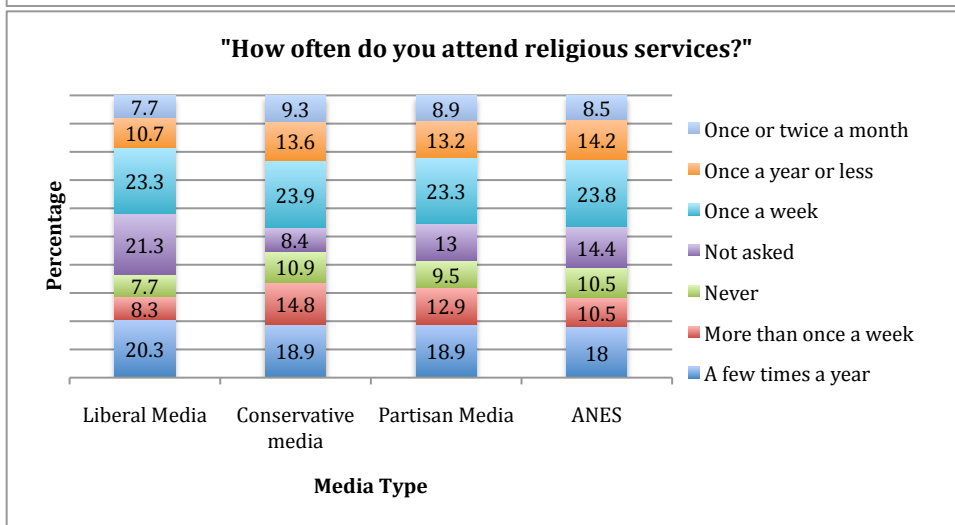
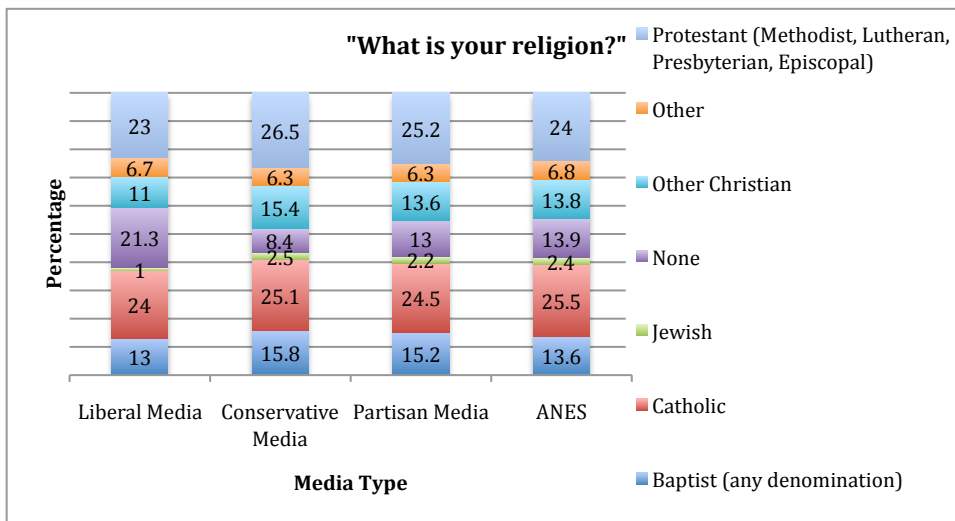
³⁴ Center for Statistical Consultation and Research, University of Michigan (December 11, 2012)

Liberal Media group had 300 respondents, the Conservative Media group had 514 respondents, the Partisan Media group had 683 respondents, and the general ANES sample had 1253 respondents.









APPENDIX C: FULL ANES DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

PARTY AFFILIATION

The ANES question that asks party affiliation is “Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an independent, or what?” The responses given were Republican, Democrat, Independent, and Something Else. There is a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square of less than 0.000) between people’s party affiliation and their consumption of liberal media. Those who identified as Democrat and Republican drove this relationship: the number of Democrats who said they consume liberal media was much more than expected (a residual of 3.8) and the number of Republicans who said they did not was much lower than expected (a residual of -3.7).

There is also a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square of less than 0.000) between people’s political party affiliation and their consumption of conservative media. Those who identified as Democrat and Republican drove this relationship: the number of Democrats who said they consume conservative media was less than expected (a residual of -3.7) and the number of Republicans who said they did not was much higher than expected (a residual of 6.2).

For a point of comparison between liberal and conservative media, there is also a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square less than 0.000) between party affiliation and consumption of any partisan media—regardless of the ideological orientation. Interestingly, only by

Republicans drove this relationship, watching partisan programming more than expected (a residual of 2.4).

IDEOLOGICAL IDENTIFICATION

The ANES question prompting political ideological orientation is “When it comes to politics, would you describe yourself as liberal, conservative, or neither liberal nor conservative?” Answers for this question were: very conservative, somewhat conservative, closer to conservatives, neither liberal nor conservative, closer to liberals, somewhat liberal, and very liberal. There is a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square of less than 0.000) between a person’s ideological identification and their consumption of liberal media. Those identifying as “somewhat conservative” and “very conservative” consume liberal programming less than expected (residuals of -2.5 and -2.7, respectively,) while those who identified as “closer to liberals” and “somewhat liberal” consume liberal programming more than expected (residuals of 2.5 and 3.0, respectively.) Those who responded “very liberal” had the strongest impact on the relationship between ideological identification and consumption of liberal media (with a residual of 4.6.)

There is also a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square of less than 0.000) between a person’s ideological identification and their consumption of conservative media. “Somewhat liberal” and “very liberal” consume conservative programming less than expected (residuals of 2.6 and -3.8 respectively), while “somewhat conservative” and “very conservative” consume conservative programming much more than expected (residuals of 5.3 and 5.1, respectively.) Those who responded “neither liberal nor conservative” also contributed to the significance of the relationship: this group consumed conservative programming *less* than expected (a residual value of -3.1).

There is a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square of less than 0.000) between a person’s ideological identification and their consumption of partisan media programming. While for liberal and conservative media, both liberals and conservatives drove the relationship, for partisan programming, only “somewhat conservative” and “very conservative” contributed to the significance (residuals of 2.7 and 2.8, respectively.) As with conservative programming, “neither liberal nor conservative” watch partisan programming less than expected (residual of -3.2).

AGE

There is a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square of 0.046) between age and consumption of liberal media, however there were no significant contributors to this relationship—there were no residual absolute values greater than 2.0. While there were not any contributors to the relationship with liberal media consumption, with conservative media consumption, there is a statistically significant relationship with age, (a Pearson Chi-Square of less than 0.000) particularly driven by those over the age of 65. The oldest age bracket consumes conservative programming more than expected (a residual of 3.4), while those between the ages of 26 and 45 consume conservative programming less than expected (a residual of -3.3).

There is also a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square of less than 0.000) between age and consumption of general partisan media. Similar to conservative programming, those over the age of 65 consume partisan programming more than expected (a residual of 2.8), while those between the ages of 26 and 45 consume partisan programming less than expected (a residual of -3.1).

EDUCATION

Overall, education was not a strong indicator of someone’s likelihood of consuming liberal, conservative or partisan programming. There was a statistically significant relationship between education and consumption of liberal media (a Pearson Chi-Square of 0.003) and consumption of conservative media (a Pearson Chi-Square of 0.007), however the only contributor (a residual with an absolute value greater than 2.0) was those with a high school education who consume liberal programming less than expected (a residual of -2.3.) Furthermore, there was not a statistically significant relationship between these two variables: the Pearson Chi-Square was 0.969. So while there was a statistically significant relationship between age with liberal and conservative media,

there were no heavy contributors to the significance to indicate a strong relationship between these two variables.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Race does not have a strong relationship with partisan media consumption. While there was a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square of 0.003) between race and consumption of conservative media, largely driven by black people consuming conservative programming less than expected (a residual of -2.0), the relationship between liberal media consumption and race was significant, (a Pearson Chi-Square of 0.038) there were no significant contributors to this relationship—there were no residual absolute values greater than 2.0. In addition, there was not a statistically significant relationship between general partisan media and race: the Pearson Chi-Square was 0.060. Overall the group that consumes liberal programming is slightly less white than the group that consumes conservative programming, but race does not have a significant relationship with partisan programming consumption.

GENDER

Overall gender does not provide immense insight into the significance of those who consume liberal, conservative, or partisan programming. While there was a statistically significant relationship between gender and liberal media consumption (a Pearson Chi-Square of 0.030), and gender and partisan media consumption (a Pearson Chi-Square of 0.031), there were no significant contributors (residuals with absolute values greater than 2.0) in either of the relationships. Additionally there was not a statistically significant relationship between gender and conservative media consumption: the Pearson Chi-Square was 0.172.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND INCOME

There was no statistical significance relating to household size or income and the consumption of liberal (the Pearson Chi-Squares were 0.109 and 0.144, respectively), conservative (the Pearson Chi-Squares were 0.303 and 0.083) or partisan media (the Pearson Chi-Squares were 0.089 and 0.342).

REGION

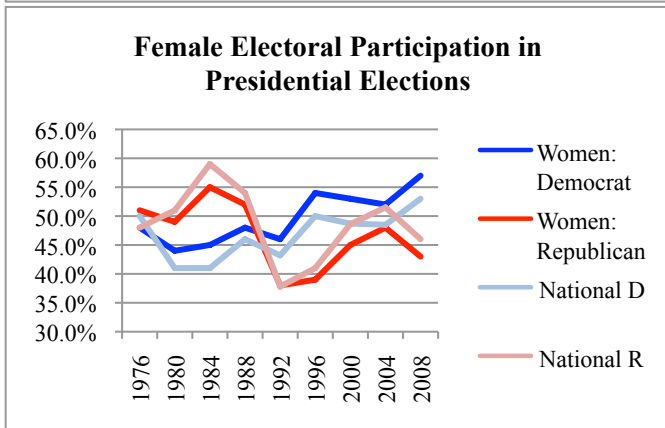
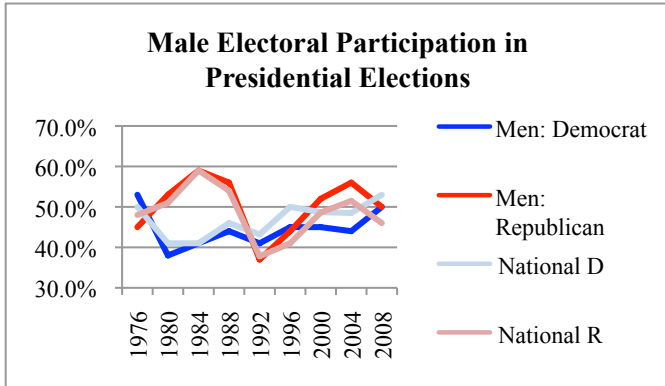
There was not a statistically significant relationship between region and consumption of liberal, conservative, or partisan media. The Pearson Chi-Squares were 0.236, 0.249 and 0.414, respectively.

RELIGION AND ATTENDANCE OF RELIGIOUS SERVICES

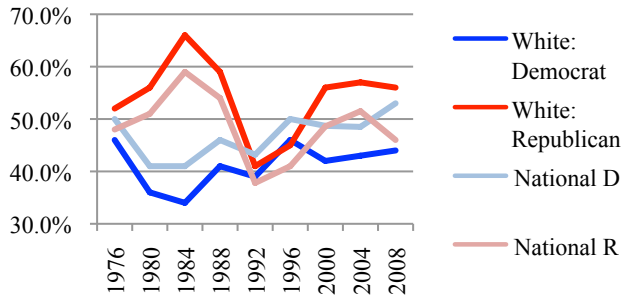
Looking at religiosity in terms of liberal media consumption, there was a statistically significant relationship with religion (a Pearson Chi-Square of 0.001), particularly driven by those who responded “none” consuming liberal programming more than expected (a residual of 3.4). However in terms of attending religious services, there was not a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square of 0.183.) For conservative media consumption, there is a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square of less than 0.000) with religion, particularly driven by those who responded “none,” who consume conservative programming much less than expected (a residual of -3.4). In regards to attendance, there was a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square of 0.022) with attendance of religious services. The most significant force is this relationship was the bracket that goes to services most often—more than once a week (with a residual of 2.4). For partisan media, there was not a statistically significant relationship with religious (the Pearson Chi-Square was 0.518), and there was a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square of 0.040) with attendance of religious services but there were no significant contributors to this relationship—there were no residual absolute values greater than 2.0.

APPENDIX D: ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION CHARTS

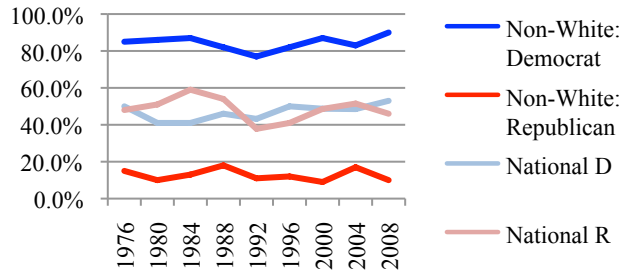
The following charts display voting trends in the United States between 1976 and 2008 for different demographics. I looked at the demographics from Presidential elections as opposed to Congressional elections that come more frequently because Presidential elections are national, it therefore was the best indicator to compare to the ANES data I analyzed, which is also collected nationwide. There are some caveats to this data: one can look at each election as a specific case and therefore ignore trends. For example, Barack Obama's campaign worked especially hard to turn out young voters; very few Democrats voted for Walter Mondale in general, regardless of demographic; and the 2000 election was too close to call for every demographic.



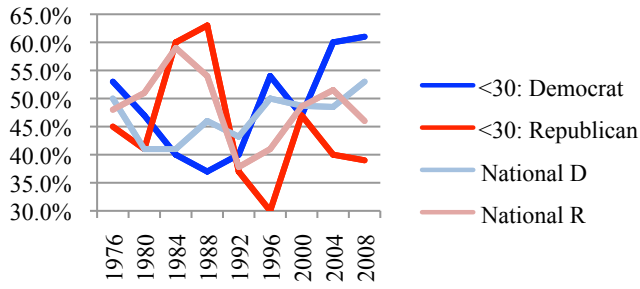
White Electoral Participation in Presidential Elections



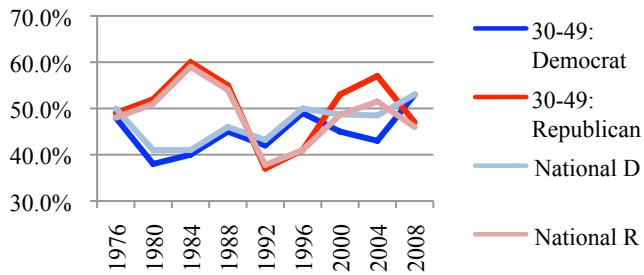
Non-White Electoral Participation in Presidential Elections



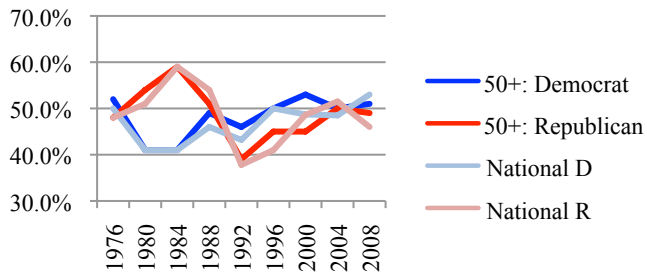
Under 30 Electoral Participation in Presidential Elections



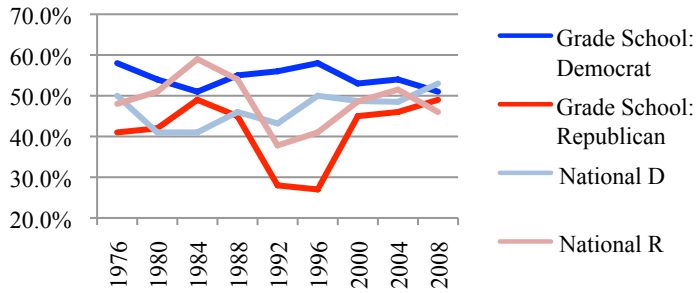
30-49 Electoral Participation in Presidential Elections



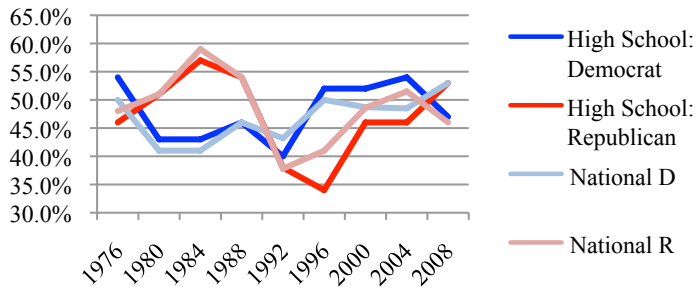
50 and Older Electoral Participation in Presidential Elections



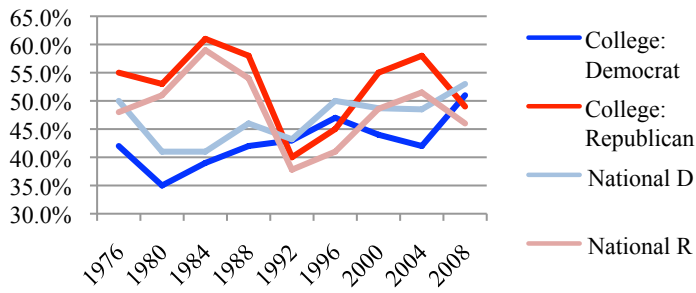
Grade School Education Electoral Participation in Presidential Elections



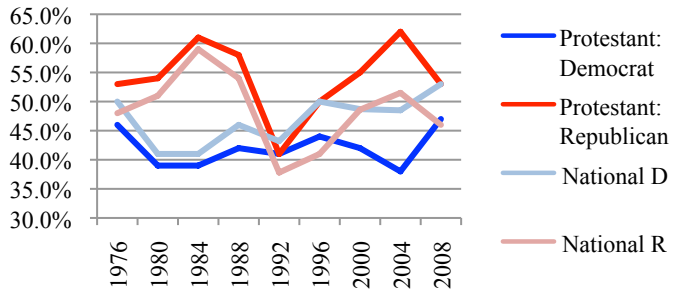
High School Education Electoral Participation in Presidential Elections



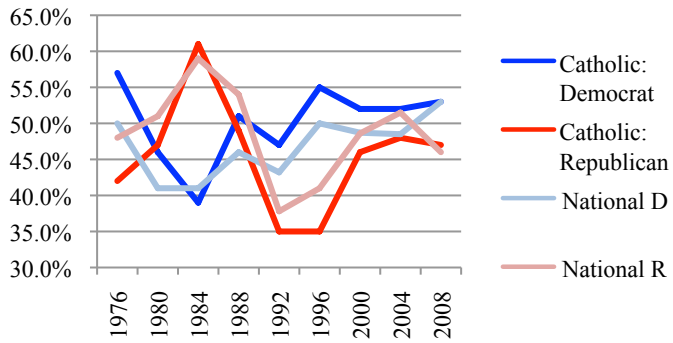
College Education Electoral Participation in Presidential Elections



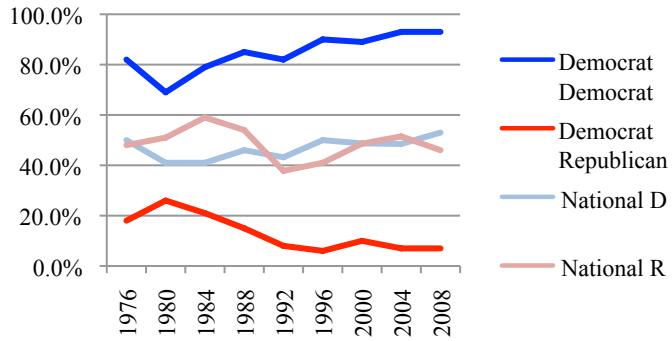
Protestant Electoral Participation in Presidential Elections



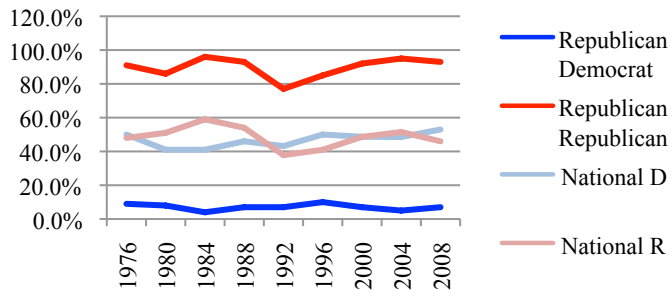
Catholic Electoral Participation in Presidential Elections



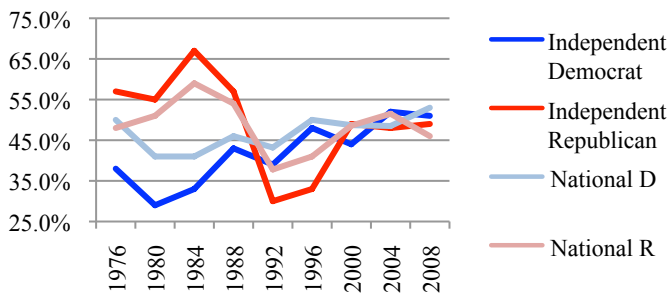
Democrat Electoral Participation in Presidential Elections



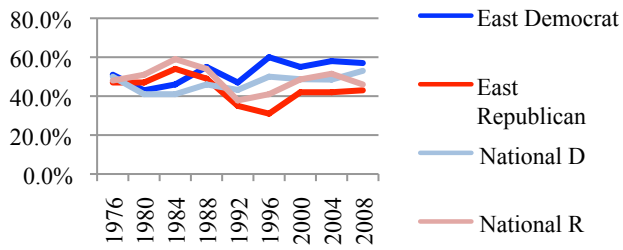
Republican Electoral Participation in Presidential Elections



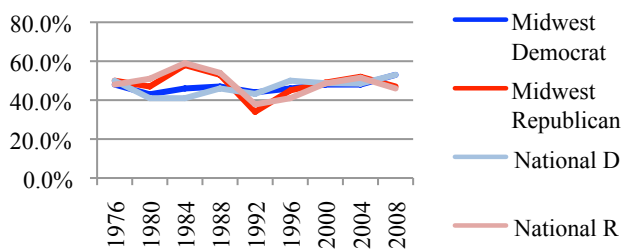
Independent Electoral Participation in Presidential Elections



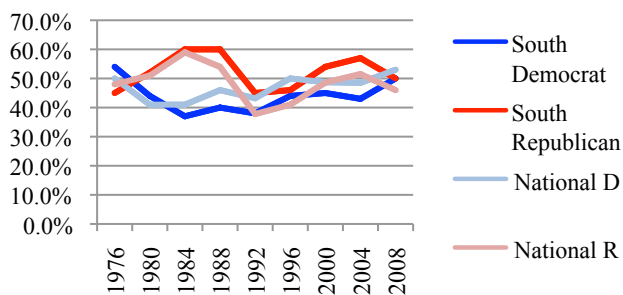
Eastern Electoral Participation in Presidential Elections



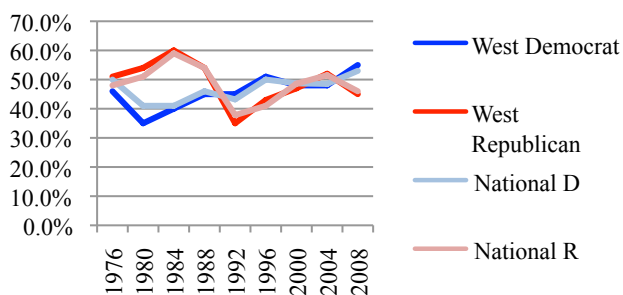
Midwestern Electoral Participation in Presidential Elections



Southern Electoral Participation in Presidential Elections



Western Electoral Participation in Presidential Elections



APPENDIX E: FULL ANES SOURCE ANALYSIS

RADIO

There was a statistically significant relationship (Pearson Chi-Square of less than 0.000) between getting information from the radio and ideological identification. Conservatives “always” get their information from the radio much more than expected (a residual of 2.2) while those who identify as neither liberal nor conservative get their information from the radio less than expected (a residual of -2.6). Expressed differently, conservatives “rarely” get their information from the radio less than expected (a residual of -2.6), while those who are neither liberal nor conservative “rarely” get their information from the radio more than expected (a residual of 3.5).

INTERNET NEWS SITES

There was a statistically significant relationship (Piereson Chi-Square of less than 0.000) between ideological identification and getting information from Internet news sites. Liberals “always” get their information from Internet news sites more than expected (a residual of 2.7), and “rarely” get their information from the Internet less than expected (a residual of -2.6). Those who are neither liberal nor conservative “always” get their news from the Internet less than expected (a residual of -3.8)—and “rarely” get their information from the Internet more than expected (a residual of 3.8).

NEWSPAPERS

There is a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square of 0.037) but no major component affecting the data.

TELEVISION

There is a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square less than 0.000) between ideological identification and getting information from TV. Conservatives “rarely” get their news from TV less than expected (a residual of -3.0), meaning that they do not watch TV less than the data should suggest. These double negatives imply that conservatives get their information from television more than expected. (The data suggests this too, but the residual value is only 1.0, so not enough to draw any larger conclusions.) Those who are neither liberal nor conservative “rarely” get their news from the TV more than expected (a residual of 2.7), implying that this group is not as likely to get their news from the TV.

MAGAZINES

There is a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square of 0.003) between ideological identification and getting information from magazines, however the only significant contributor to this relationship was that those who are neither liberal nor conservative “sometimes” get their news from magazines less than expected (a residual of -2.1).

INTERNET BLOGS

There is a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square of 0.014) between ideological identification and getting information from Internet blogs, however the only significant contributor to this relationship was that those who are neither liberal nor conservative “sometimes” get their news from Internet blogs less than expected (a residual of -2.2).

APPENDIX F: FULL ANES PROGRAMS ANALYSIS

THE NETWORKS (NBC, ABC, CBS)

There was not a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square of 0.227) between ideological identification and consumption of the networks’ evening programs (NBC Nightly News, ABC World News Tonight, and CBS Evening News).

NPR

There is a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square of less than 0.000) between ideological identification and consumption of NPR Programs (Morning Edition, All Things Considered, and Fresh Air.) Particularly driving this relationship were conservatives, who listen to NPR less than expected (a residual of -2.9), and liberals, who listen to NPR much more than expected (a residual of 6.3).

CNN

There is a statistically significant relationship (a Pearson Chi-Square of less than 0.000) between ideological identification and consumption of CNN Programs (Anderson Cooper 360, CNN Newsroom/Headline News, Late Edition with Wolf Blitzer, The Situation Room, and Piers Morgan Tonight.) Particularly driving this relationship were liberals, who watch CNN much more than expected (a residual of 3.4).