Party Realignment, Education, and the Turnout Advantage: Revisiting the Partisan Effect of Turnout

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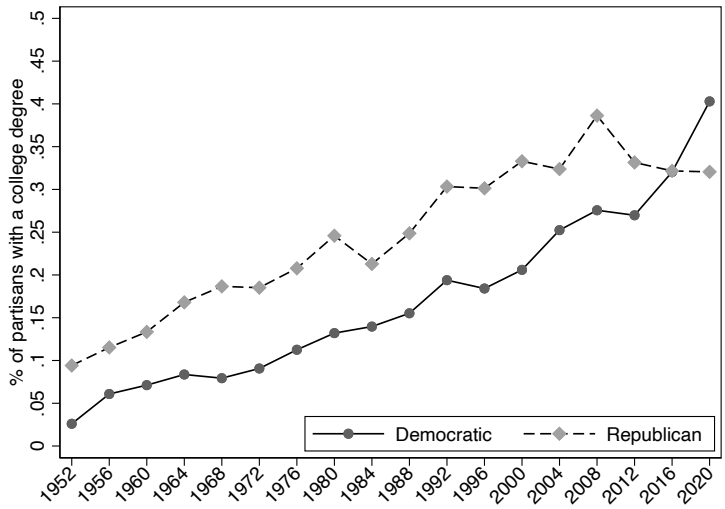
Abstract

Education is a strong—if not the strongest—predictor of political participation. As non-college voters align with the Republican Party, it is necessary to revisit the partisan effect of turnout. We predict that, since 2016, the Democratic Party benefits from lower turnout. Using validated voter turnout from the Cooperative Election Study (CES), we simulate election results across turnout rates for the 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2020 presidential elections. Our findings show that increases in turnout benefit the Democratic Party in 2008 and 2012. However, this pattern has drastically changed. In 2016 and 2020, the Democratic Party is advantaged by lower turnout. During this period, the profile of marginal voters has also changed: less educated voters most on the fence about participating in presidential elections are increasingly Republican. These results indicate that continued party realignment along the lines of education could lead to a persistent reversal in the expected partisan effect of turnout.

Keywords: turnout, party realignment, education, class cleavages

Consolidated democracies witnessed partisan realignments along the lines of socioeconomic status over the last decades (Dalton 2018). In the US, Donald Trump has accelerated the transition of low-socioeconomic status voters from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party (Kitschelt and Rehm 2019). Specifically, less-educated whites are leading the abandonment of partisan cleavages established in the New Deal era. During the 2016 election, many spectators and analysts noted that Trump's surge was strongest among less-educated Americans.[1] Based on a study of validated voters from the Pew Research Center, Trump earned more than 60% of the white, non-college votes in the 2016 and 2020 general elections.[2]

Figure 1: Percent of Partisans with a College Degree, 1952-2020



Source: American National Election Studies (ANES).

Concomitantly, support among college-educated voters for the Democratic Party has increased. As Figure 1 depicts,[3] the Republican Party was composed of more college educated identifiers than the Democratic Party from 1952 to 2012. In 2016, both parties had approximately the same share of identifiers with a college degree, and, by 2020, the Democratic Party had an eight-point advantage. The Republican Party has witnessed a decline in

[1] As early as 2015, for example, Janell Ross wrote a Washington Post headline claiming "Donald Trump's surge is all about less-educated Americans." In 2016, Ford Fessenden of the New York Times argued that Trump's "big bet" was "on less-educated whites." Trump himself declared his love for "the poorly educated" in his victory speech following the Nevada Republican primary.

[2] See the Pew Research Center's article for more information on validated voters in 2016 and 2020.

[3] The data in Figure 1 are from the American National Election Studies time series.

the percent of college-educated identifiers despite a continual increase in college graduates among the electorate. These trends suggest that education plays a crucial role in the recent realignment observed in American politics. Education is also a strong predictor of political participation: college graduates are more likely to participate than citizens who do not have a college degree (Mayer 2011). Yet, how this new cleavage affects the relationship between turnout and partisan vote share remains unexplored. In this paper, we fill this gap.

Following the strategy proposed by Martinez and Gill (2005), we simulate Democratic vote share across hypothetical turnout rates in the last four presidential elections. In line with the education realignment accelerated by Donald Trump, we predict that the 2016 and 2020 elections reversed the turnout advantage observed in the two previous elections when Barack Obama was able to mobilize minorities who are consistently less likely to participate (Philpot, Shaw and McGowen 2009). Since 2016, voter turnout should no longer increase the Democratic vote share as white, less-educated voters are aligning with the Republican Party. Our findings support these expectations. We further investigate the profile of marginal voters across presidential elections. Marginal voters are less educated than the general population of voters across the four elections. These less-educated voters were overwhelmingly Democratic in 2008, but, by 2020, they were equally Democratic and Republican. We conclude by discussing (i) if our findings will be persistent, (ii) if these cleavages could cross ethnic lines in the future, and (iii) our findings' implications for reforms that can reduce voter turnout.

Turnout Advantage and Education

A vast literature looks at the partisan effects of voter turnout. Most findings are suggestive that, on average, Democratic candidates benefit from higher turnout (Hansford and Gomez 2010; Martinez and Hill 2007; Franklin and Grier 1997). Although this Democratic turnout advantage may not be large enough to change the outcomes of most presidential or Senate elections (Brunell and DiNardo 2004; Citrin, Schickler and Sides 2003), changes in turnout rate can be consequential. Fraga (2018) argues, for instance, that a full turnout in 2016 would have delivered Hillary Clinton the Electoral College victory over Donald Trump. Other

scholars, however, outright reject the presence of a partisan turnout advantage (Shaw and Petrocik 2020) or posit it is conditional on which party has the majority of "core voters" within an electorate (DeNardo 1980; Tucker, Vedlitz and DeNardo 1986) or which party has the incumbent candidate (Grofman, Owen and Collet 1999).

These mixed findings reflect, in part, two different research questions (Grofman, Owen and Collet 1999). (i) Does the Democratic Party benefit in elections with higher turnout? (ii) Would the Democratic Party benefit if turnout were higher in a given election? Martinez and Gill (2005) answer the latter question by simulating turnout rates using survey data. They find that there was a Democratic turnout advantage in the 1960s and 1970s that disappeared over time. After the New Deal, the working class sorted into the Democratic Party and the middle and upper class into the Republican Party. As the class-based cleavage weakened, so too did the Democratic turnout advantage. Yet, a new cleavage has recently emerged along the lines of socioeconomic status. Specifically, white non-college voters—who, according to the 2020 Census, comprise more than 40% of the total electorate—are more likely to vote for Republican candidates. Meanwhile, the Democratic Party has, for the first time, a larger share of identifiers with a college degree than the Republican Party (Figure 1).

In this paper, we investigate partisan turnout advantage in light of this change in the composition of the two parties. Why would an emerging cleavage along educational lines change the partisan turnout advantage? Scholars may disagree on whether there is a turnout advantage, but it is beyond question that education is a strong predictor of voter turnout (Sondheimer and Green 2010), voter registration (Timpone 1998), and a variety of other political activities (Mayer 2011). The more educated citizens are, the more likely they will participate in politics. There is an ongoing debate over the causal relationship between education and participation (Berinsky and Lenz 2011; Tenn 2007). But, it is unquestionable that education is highly correlated with participation (Persson 2015). If educated people participate more, then a migration of the educated into one party should alter the turnout advantage assumptions of the past.

Therefore, we expect to find that higher turnout in the 2016 and 2020 elections benefits the Republican Party. As college graduates become more likely to vote for Democrats, lower turnout should increase the Democratic vote share in these presidential elections—as college-educated voters are also more likely to turn out. Although the education realignment may reflect a long-term process of changing voting behavior, Trump's political emergence has certainly accelerated it (Kitschelt and Rehm 2019). In 2008 and 2012, the Democratic Party did not have a clear advantage among college graduates. Moreover, Obama's candidacy propelled the participation of minorities who are historically less likely to turn out. For these reasons, higher turnout benefits the Democratic Party in these two elections. These expectations lead to our two hypotheses about turnout advantage in recent presidential elections:

Hypothesis 1 *Lower (higher) voter turnout in the 2008 and 2012 elections causes a decrease (increase) in Democratic vote share.*

Hypothesis 2 *Lower (higher) voter turnout in the 2016 and 2020 elections causes an increase (decrease) in Democratic vote share.*

Data & Methods

To test our hypothesis, we extend Martinez and Gill's (2005) analysis and simulate vote share across levels of voter turnout. They estimate multinomial logistic models that predict vote choice (including abstention). Then, record the predicted probabilities for each respondent. With the predicted probabilities of abstaining, the levels of voter turnout are simulated. For example, to simulate vote share when turnout is 5% lower than observed, the 5% of respondents that voted with the highest probability of abstaining are changed to abstainers. To simulate 5% higher turnout, the 5% of abstainers with the lowest probability of abstaining are counted as voters. These new voters "cast votes" for the party they are more likely to have supported according to the predicted probabilities.

We employ Martinez and Gill's (2005) method to simulate vote share across levels of voter turnout in the last four presidential elections: 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2020. However, we use CES data instead of ANES. The CES offers two major advantages. First, it includes

validated voter turnout for all elections—eliminating respondent misreports of voter turnout. Second, the CES has many more respondents per election, which increases the accuracy and power of our estimates. Despite these differences, trends in our main findings are robust to simulations that use ANES data.[4]

Our dependent variable is constructed using both self-reports and validated voter turnout. We use self-reports to record whether a respondent voted for the Democratic or Republican Party, but these reports are only counted if the individual's vote is validated. All validated nonvoters and self-reported nonvoters are recorded as abstainers.[5] Our models include a long list of independent variables: party identification, ideology, gender, race, marital status, family income, employment status, children, religion, economic evaluations, news interest, education, and presidential approval.

Findings

Figures 2a, 2b, 2c, and 2d show Democratic vote share across levels of simulated turnout in the 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2020 presidential elections.[6] In 2008 and 2012, we see a slight increase in Democratic vote share when turnout increases above the observed turnout rate (the dashed vertical line), and a sharp decrease in Democratic vote share when turnout decreases. A 20-percent drop from the observed turnout rate causes a 2.2 and 2.5 percent decrease in Democratic vote share in 2008 and 2012 respectively. These findings corroborate Hypothesis 1, showing a Democratic turnout advantage when Obama is on the ballot.

A reversal in the relationship between turnout and Democratic vote share appears in 2016. According to our simulation, Hillary Clinton receives approximately the same share of the vote when turnout is between 25 and 95 percent. However, in stark contrast with the 2008 and 2012 elections, the Democratic Party would benefit from extremely low turnout. While changes in turnout by 20 percent do not change the outcome of the 2016 presidential

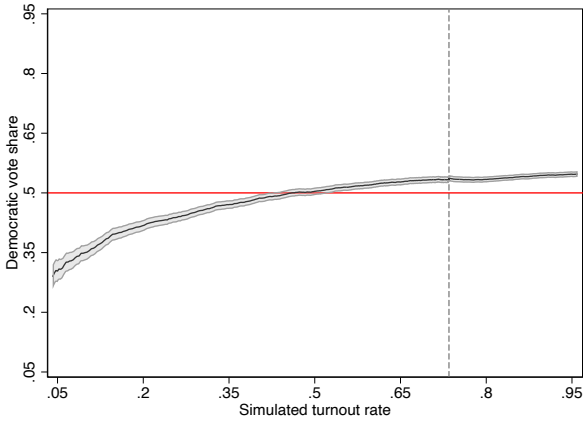
[4]See Figures SM5a-SM5d and Tables SM6, SM7, SM8, and SM9 of the Supplementary Material.

[5]Following Martinez and Gill (2005), we drop self-reported third party or write-in votes.

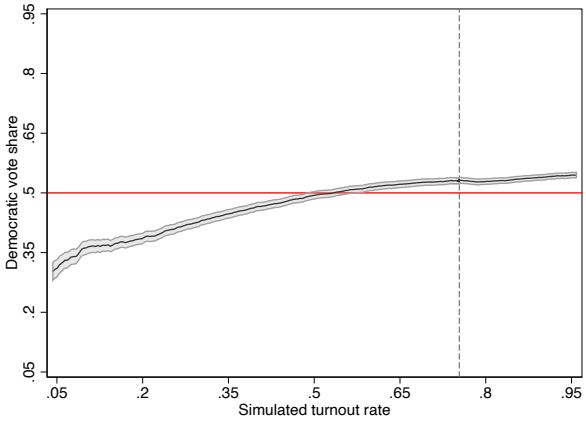
[6]Simulations with predicted probabilities obtained from multinomial logistic regressions. The full regression results are included in Tables SM1, SM2, SM3, and SM4 of Supplementary Material.

election, this result suggests that a change in voting behavior was underway at the time, and increasing voter turnout no longer advantages the Democratic Party.

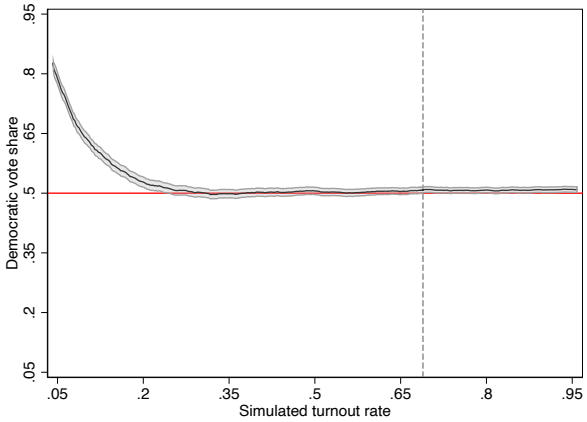
2a: Democratic vote share by simulated turnout rate, 2008



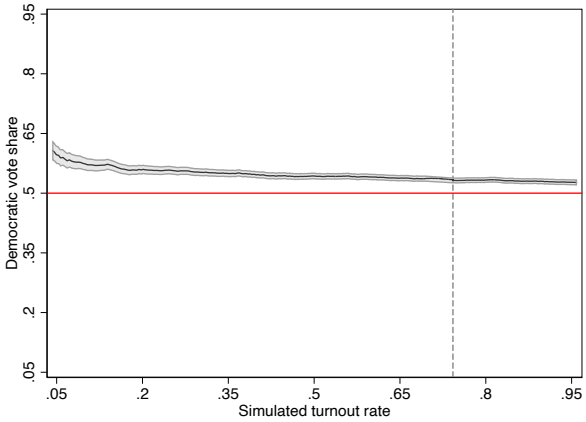
2b: Democratic vote share by simulated turnout rate, 2012



2c: Democratic vote share by simulated turnout rate, 2016



2d: Democratic vote share by simulated turnout rate, 2020

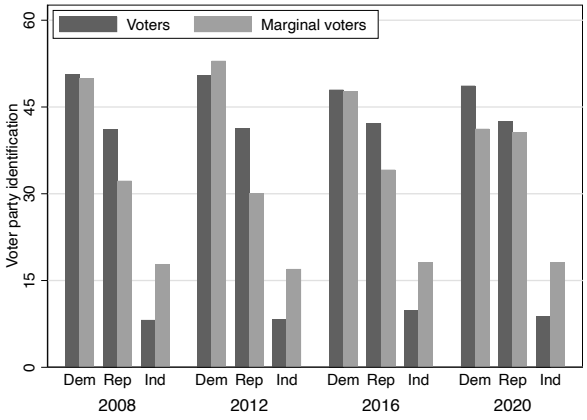


Note: The red line indicates 50% of Democratic vote share. The vertical dashed line shows the observed turnout rate. Gray areas represent 95% confidence intervals.

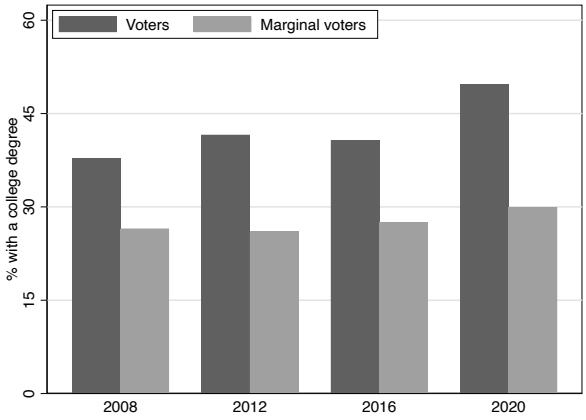
After four years of Trump's administration, there is a negative relationship between turnout and Democratic vote share. The 2020 simulation results provide strong support for Hypothesis 2, showing that the Democratic party would benefit from a lower voter turnout. As turnout increases by 20 percent, Democratic vote share declines by 0.6 percent. In contrast, a 20-percent decrease in turnout causes a 0.9 percent increase in Democratic vote share. Though these are small changes in vote share, five states in the 2020 presidential

election were decided by less than 50 thousand votes.[7]

3a: Partisanship



3b: College Education



Note: Marginal voters are the 15% of CES validated voters most likely to abstain and the 15% of abstainers most likely to vote according to our models. Voters are every respondent who cast a ballot.

The evidence from the simulations suggests that the new education cleavage was not as developed in 2016 as 2020. To further understand this process, we investigate whether the marginal voters and abstainers—these who were most "on the fence" about participating—are increasingly Republican. We define marginal voters as the 15% of voters most likely to abstain and the 15% of abstainers most likely to vote according to our models. The partisanship and educational attainment of marginal voters is shown in Figures 3a and 3b respectively. As expected, marginal voters are less educated than the general population of voters. But the partisanship of marginal voters has changed.

In 2008, marginal voters were overwhelmingly Democratic. The share of Republicans among these voters increased in 2016. But, by 2020, the proportion of Democratic and Republican marginal voters are virtually the same. At the same time, the share of college graduates has increased in the electorate but only slightly changed among marginal voters. Consistent with the education realignment, Figures 3a and 3b show that while the educational attainment of marginal voters stayed constant, their partisan attachment has moved

[7]Our simulation indicates that Joe Biden would win the popular vote across all levels of turnout rate. Such a Democratic advantage could be the product of peculiarities in the 2020 election, such as Trump's high disapproval rate and the COVID-19 pandemic; or it could reflect that a low turnout favors the party with a plurality of support as it is gaining ground among voters who are more likely to turnout: college graduates. That is a question for future research. Either way, the 2020 election shows a change in turnout advantage consistent with the education realignment: a lower turnout rate advantages the Democratic Party.

toward the Republican Party.

Conclusion

Given the signs of an education-based party realignment in American politics, we extend Martinez and Gill's (2005) approach to investigate the partisan effect of turnout in recent presidential elections. We predict that higher turnout increases the Democratic vote share in 2008 and 2012 as Obama mobilized minorities. However, because Trump accelerated the realignment along educational lines, higher turnout no longer advantages the Democratic Party in 2016 and 2020. Our findings confirm these hypotheses and show that the ongoing realignment could drastically change previous assumptions about the effects of voter turnout.

Education is not a novel cleavage, but the new partisan attachment across levels of education could redefine the relevance of this cleavage in American politics. For this reason, future research should consider what the arising relevance of the education cleavage means for U.S. politics. Is this a persistent party realignment or just a transitory Trump effect? Only time can answer this question, but trends observed by Kitschelt and Rehm (2019) suggest that the realignment is a long-term process hastened by Trump. Hence, our findings may represent a new and enduring relationship between voter turnout and election results.

Another interesting question concerns whether this realignment can travel across ethnic and racial lines. Would it be limited to white voters? Or can it also influence voting behavior in other groups? The education gap among Hispanic voters in 2020 indicates that it can: Hispanic vote share for Trump jumps from 30% among college graduates to 41% among those without a college degree.[8] Finally, our results also suggest that electoral reforms to reduce voter turnout can trigger unexpected consequences. By making participation more difficult for less-educated voters, reforms such as voter ID legislation may benefit Democratic candidates rather than their Republican sponsors. As such, future research should investigate the implications of education inequality both within and across minority groups and the effects these inequalities may have on the future of U.S. politics.

[8]Numbers from the Pew Research Center's study with validated voters.

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Supplementary Material

Table SM1: 2008 CES voter model

	(1) Abstain		(2) Republican	
Party ID				
Democratic	0.415**	(0.0849)	1.254**	(0.127)
Lean Democratic	0.388**	(0.0830)	0.258+	(0.151)
Independent	1.459**	(0.0876)	2.147**	(0.131)
Lean Republican	2.056**	(0.149)	3.603**	(0.168)
Republican	1.255**	(0.120)	2.924**	(0.142)
Strong Republican	2.430**	(0.169)	4.147**	(0.184)
Ideology				
Liberal	0.0681	(0.0971)	0.470*	(0.218)
Moderate	0.178+	(0.0949)	1.212**	(0.207)
Conservative	0.372**	(0.125)	1.936**	(0.218)
Very conservative	1.152**	(0.186)	2.764**	(0.260)
Male	0.226**	(0.0564)	-0.0730	(0.0645)
Black	-0.461**	(0.0997)	-2.510**	(0.246)
Hispanic	-0.0286	(0.109)	-0.163	(0.128)
Married	-0.141*	(0.0593)	0.323**	(0.0705)
Income	-0.0343**	(0.00933)	0.00173	(0.0107)
Unemployed	0.0393	(0.122)	-0.241	(0.156)
Has children	0.0574	(0.0596)	-0.126+	(0.0675)
Catholic	-0.232**	(0.0696)	0.195*	(0.0799)
Protestant	-0.151*	(0.0634)	0.137+	(0.0728)
Economy				
Gotten better	0.221	(0.512)	0.747	(0.574)
Stayed same	0.200	(0.403)	0.440	(0.453)
Gotten worse	-0.117	(0.336)	0.0108	(0.399)
Gotten much worse	-0.362	(0.334)	-0.389	(0.397)
Follow news				
Some of the time	0.369**	(0.0634)	0.000805	(0.0732)
Only now and then	0.676**	(0.0878)	-0.0605	(0.111)
Hardly at all	1.358**	(0.135)	-0.246	(0.176)
Education				
High school	-0.418**	(0.122)	-0.114	(0.157)
Some college	-0.788**	(0.128)	-0.320*	(0.162)
2-year degree	-0.764**	(0.149)	-0.249	(0.183)
4-year degree	-0.962**	(0.132)	-0.488**	(0.166)
Post-grad degree	-0.936**	(0.143)	-0.557**	(0.183)
Presidential approval				
Somewhat approve	-0.434	(0.349)	-0.389	(0.346)
Somewhat disapprove	-1.417**	(0.341)	-1.471**	(0.339)
Strongly disapprove	-2.051**	(0.338)	-2.947**	(0.338)
Constant	1.591**	(0.491)	-0.854	(0.568)
N	22316			
Psuedo R^2	0.402			

Standard errors in parentheses
+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01
Democratic vote is the baseline category

Table SM2: 2012 CES voter model

	(1) Abstain		(2) Republican	
Party ID				
Democratic	0.207*	(0.0953)	0.945**	(0.251)
Lean Democratic	0.0740	(0.0959)	0.439+	(0.265)
Independent	0.947**	(0.0998)	1.432**	(0.255)
Lean Republican	1.328**	(0.220)	2.802**	(0.320)
Republican	1.326**	(0.147)	2.907**	(0.271)
Strong Republican	1.886**	(0.265)	3.460**	(0.340)
Ideology				
Liberal	-0.342**	(0.132)	0.437	(0.296)
Moderate	-0.186	(0.135)	1.024**	(0.273)
Conservative	-0.236	(0.163)	1.618**	(0.288)
Very conservative	0.142	(0.264)	1.872**	(0.358)
Male	0.237**	(0.0649)	0.125	(0.0863)
Black	-0.423**	(0.107)	-1.013**	(0.276)
Hispanic	0.0536	(0.108)	-0.180	(0.165)
Married	-0.221**	(0.0688)	0.189*	(0.0925)
Income	-0.0435**	(0.0113)	0.0154	(0.0155)
Unemployed	0.0116	(0.107)	-0.146	(0.144)
Has children	0.446**	(0.0766)	0.146	(0.0980)
Catholic	-0.0194	(0.0834)	0.217+	(0.112)
Protestant	0.000292	(0.0745)	0.258**	(0.0980)
Economy				
Gotten better	-0.421*	(0.180)	-1.033**	(0.310)
Stayed same	-0.0277	(0.187)	-0.166	(0.302)
Gotten worse	0.305	(0.197)	0.301	(0.308)
Gotten much worse	0.417	(0.259)	0.383	(0.350)
Follow news				
Some of the time	0.445**	(0.0770)	0.154	(0.0988)
Only now and then	0.898**	(0.0987)	0.236+	(0.131)
Hardly at all	1.181**	(0.136)	-0.297	(0.199)
Education				
High school	-0.285+	(0.152)	0.0642	(0.210)
Some college	-0.520**	(0.156)	-0.0378	(0.215)
2-year degree	-0.780**	(0.173)	-0.255	(0.239)
4-year degree	-0.813**	(0.163)	-0.112	(0.225)
Post-grad degree	-0.989**	(0.179)	-0.137	(0.250)
Presidential approval				
Somewhat approve	0.134+	(0.0773)	1.162**	(0.333)
Somewhat disapprove	1.083**	(0.123)	3.570**	(0.353)
Strongly disapprove	2.763**	(0.206)	5.802**	(0.379)
Constant	-0.674**	(0.245)	-5.992**	(0.474)
N	31378			
Psuedo R^2	0.489			

Standard errors in parentheses
+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01
Democratic vote is the baseline category

Table SM3: 2016 CES voter model

	(1) Abstain		(2) Republican	
Party ID				
Democratic	0.579**	(0.0965)	1.317**	(0.209)
Lean Democratic	0.572**	(0.102)	0.689**	(0.248)
Independent	1.601**	(0.106)	2.112**	(0.212)
Lean Republican	1.857**	(0.185)	3.331**	(0.261)
Republican	1.146**	(0.148)	2.695**	(0.227)
Strong Republican	1.928**	(0.199)	3.444**	(0.259)
Ideology				
Liberal	-0.222+	(0.116)	0.680*	(0.302)
Moderate	-0.143	(0.116)	1.027**	(0.287)
Conservative	0.283+	(0.147)	1.767**	(0.295)
Very conservative	0.721*	(0.281)	2.209**	(0.378)
Male	0.308**	(0.0665)	0.290**	(0.0848)
Black	-0.240*	(0.107)	-0.234	(0.219)
Hispanic	0.156	(0.109)	-0.193	(0.152)
Married	-0.317**	(0.0672)	0.00852	(0.0871)
Income	-0.0525**	(0.0109)	0.00746	(0.0131)
Unemployed	0.153	(0.152)	-0.163	(0.188)
Has children	0.580**	(0.0737)	0.0842	(0.0937)
Catholic	-0.0242	(0.0866)	0.303**	(0.107)
Protestant	-0.123	(0.0769)	0.366**	(0.0979)
Economy				
Gotten better	-0.519**	(0.140)	-0.315	(0.619)
Stayed same	-0.252+	(0.145)	0.416	(0.611)
Gotten worse	0.255	(0.162)	0.916	(0.615)
Gotten much worse	0.371+	(0.219)	1.033	(0.632)
Follow news				
Some of the time	0.756**	(0.0742)	-0.0391	(0.0944)
Only now and then	1.390**	(0.0935)	-0.0708	(0.126)
Hardly at all	1.712**	(0.144)	-0.192	(0.177)
Education				
High school	-0.0839	(0.156)	-0.00398	(0.210)
Some college	-0.599**	(0.156)	-0.325	(0.210)
2-year degree	-0.748**	(0.170)	-0.351	(0.225)
4-year degree	-0.967**	(0.160)	-0.740**	(0.212)
Post-grad degree	-1.334**	(0.170)	-0.824**	(0.225)
Presidential approval				
Somewhat approve	0.241**	(0.0785)	1.428**	(0.205)
Somewhat disapprove	0.930**	(0.123)	3.108**	(0.209)
Strongly disapprove	2.221**	(0.153)	5.024**	(0.224)
Constant	-0.797**	(0.215)	-6.226**	(0.772)
N	31582			
Psuedo R^2	0.466			

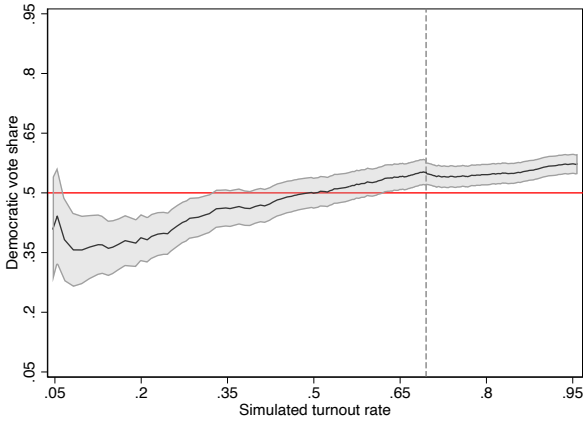
Standard errors in parentheses
+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01
Democratic vote is the baseline category

Table SM4: 2020 CES voter model

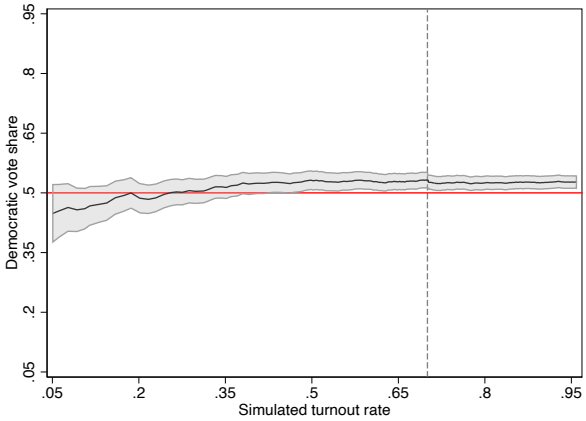
	(1) Abstain		(2) Republican	
Party ID				
Democratic	0.391**	(0.106)	1.578**	(0.241)
Lean Democratic	0.498**	(0.0980)	1.244**	(0.277)
Independent	1.605**	(0.0989)	2.703**	(0.220)
Lean Republican	1.792**	(0.160)	3.494**	(0.252)
Republican	1.391**	(0.142)	3.072**	(0.238)
Strong Republican	1.675**	(0.186)	3.495**	(0.260)
Ideology				
Liberal	-0.289**	(0.103)	-0.203	(0.265)
Moderate	-0.137	(0.107)	0.508*	(0.229)
Conservative	0.0202	(0.158)	1.212**	(0.252)
Very conservative	0.769**	(0.287)	1.809**	(0.356)
Male	0.0321	(0.0676)	0.0683	(0.0892)
Black	-0.0174	(0.0993)	-0.853**	(0.248)
Hispanic	0.117	(0.105)	-0.0381	(0.150)
Married	-0.573**	(0.0765)	-0.125	(0.0987)
Income	-0.0460**	(0.0118)	0.0267+	(0.0154)
Unemployed	0.355**	(0.104)	-0.297+	(0.156)
Has children	0.548**	(0.0760)	0.0739	(0.101)
Catholic	-0.124	(0.0979)	0.0116	(0.126)
Protestant	-0.272**	(0.0793)	0.224*	(0.102)
Economy				
Gotten better	-1.174**	(0.338)	-1.107**	(0.343)
Stayed same	-0.847**	(0.326)	-0.976**	(0.339)
Gotten worse	-0.805**	(0.308)	-0.830**	(0.315)
Gotten much worse	-0.914**	(0.306)	-1.060**	(0.318)
Follow news				
Some of the time	0.574**	(0.0783)	-0.114	(0.108)
Only now and then	0.858**	(0.104)	-0.139	(0.137)
Hardly at all	1.526**	(0.136)	0.189	(0.178)
Education				
High school	-0.345*	(0.166)	0.227	(0.223)
Some college	-0.690**	(0.167)	0.306	(0.226)
2-year degree	-0.744**	(0.177)	0.282	(0.245)
4-year degree	-1.365**	(0.172)	-0.0126	(0.231)
Post-grad degree	-1.165**	(0.187)	0.0506	(0.248)
Presidential approval				
Somewhat approve	-1.270**	(0.265)	-1.602**	(0.258)
Somewhat disapprove	-2.942**	(0.254)	-4.353**	(0.255)
Strongly disapprove	-3.987**	(0.249)	-7.552**	(0.284)
Constant	3.986**	(0.384)	1.584**	(0.481)
N	36690			
Psuedo R^2	0.548			

Standard errors in parentheses
+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01
Democratic vote is the baseline category

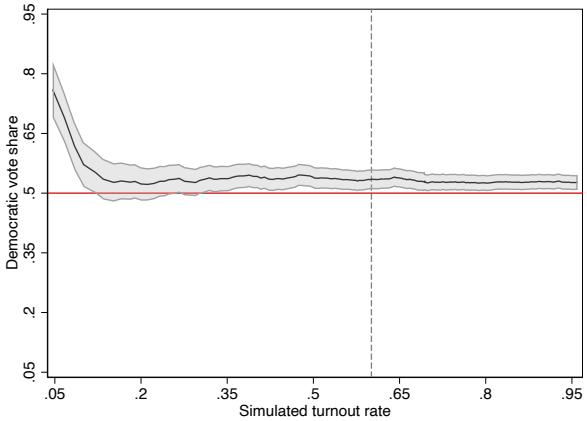
SM5a: Democratic vote share by simulated turnout rate, 2008



SM5b: Democratic vote share by simulated turnout rate, 2012



SM5c: Democratic vote share by simulated turnout rate, 2016



SM5d: Democratic vote share by simulated turnout rate, 2020

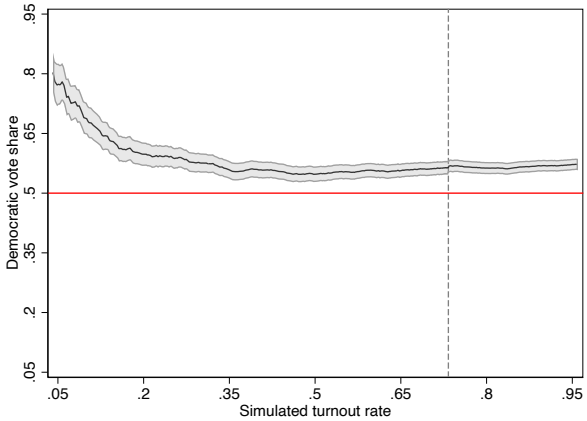


Table SM6: 2008 ANES voter model

	(1) Abstain		(2) Republican	
Party ID				
Democratic	0.527*	(0.230)	0.621	(0.459)
Lean Democratic	0.863**	(0.231)	0.138	(0.482)
Independent	1.858**	(0.290)	1.992**	(0.459)
Lean Republican	1.502**	(0.322)	3.015**	(0.446)
Republican	1.325**	(0.387)	3.420**	(0.473)
Strong Republican	1.754**	(0.545)	3.923**	(0.609)
Ideology				
Liberal	0.948*	(0.482)	0.727	(1.157)
Slightly liberal	1.142*	(0.502)	1.675	(1.152)
Moderate	1.686**	(0.442)	1.984+	(1.115)
Slightly conservative	1.901**	(0.497)	2.473*	(1.125)
Conservative	2.288**	(0.546)	2.911*	(1.144)
Extremely conservative	2.886**	(0.597)	3.806**	(1.187)
Male	0.248	(0.156)	-0.119	(0.213)
Black	-0.909**	(0.187)	-4.392**	(1.036)
Hispanic	0.0129	(0.180)	-0.802**	(0.255)
Married	-0.305+	(0.175)	0.349	(0.227)
Income	-0.0518	(0.0787)	-0.0360	(0.114)
Unemployed	0.0104	(0.253)	-0.988*	(0.417)
Catholic	-0.541*	(0.230)	0.00743	(0.310)
Protestant	-0.140	(0.188)	0.262	(0.250)
Economy				
Stayed same	-0.204	(0.632)	-0.270	(0.796)
Gotten worse	-0.246	(0.610)	-0.193	(0.741)
Education				
High school	-0.381	(0.401)	0.439	(0.794)
Some college	-0.895*	(0.414)	0.538	(0.802)
College degree	-1.099*	(0.433)	0.480	(0.822)
Pres. approval	0.789**	(0.257)	1.380**	(0.272)
Constant	-1.333	(0.895)	-4.608**	(1.574)
N	2026			
Psuedo R^2	0.344			

Standard errors in parentheses

+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Democratic vote is the baseline category

Table SM7: 2012 ANES voter model

	(1) Abstain		(2) Republican	
Party ID				
Democratic	0.318+	(0.178)	1.476**	(0.369)
Lean Democratic	0.536**	(0.169)	0.906*	(0.450)
Independent	1.493**	(0.191)	2.183**	(0.376)
Lean Republican	2.170**	(0.289)	3.742**	(0.418)
Republican	1.700**	(0.251)	3.371**	(0.395)
Strong Republican	1.843**	(0.351)	4.104**	(0.451)
Ideology				
Liberal	-0.285	(0.294)	-0.0969	(0.700)
Slightly liberal	-0.202	(0.293)	0.441	(0.627)
Moderate	-0.119	(0.269)	1.040+	(0.575)
Slightly conservative	0.0170	(0.307)	1.490*	(0.593)
Conservative	0.594+	(0.345)	2.118**	(0.621)
Extremely conservative	0.942+	(0.495)	2.192**	(0.725)
Male	0.178	(0.114)	-0.00393	(0.151)
Black	-0.282	(0.183)	-1.474**	(0.421)
Hispanic	0.161	(0.165)	-0.260	(0.235)
Married	-0.203	(0.124)	0.0223	(0.159)
Income	-0.156**	(0.0574)	0.153*	(0.0772)
Unemployed	-0.0115	(0.201)	-0.464	(0.285)
Catholic	-0.395**	(0.152)	-0.0841	(0.206)
Protestant	-0.254+	(0.135)	0.202	(0.180)
Economy				
Stayed same	0.197	(0.129)	0.516*	(0.228)
Gotten worse	0.591**	(0.167)	1.083**	(0.243)
Interest				
Somewhat interested	-0.711**	(0.158)	-0.0151	(0.218)
Very much interested	-1.283**	(0.167)	0.00568	(0.226)
Education				
High school	-0.0676	(0.284)	0.452	(0.562)
Some college	-0.301	(0.294)	0.567	(0.569)
College degree	-0.618*	(0.303)	0.138	(0.576)
Pres. approval	-1.438**	(0.173)	-3.097**	(0.225)
Constant	1.672**	(0.451)	-3.460**	(0.881)
N	5484			
Psuedo R^2	0.433			

Standard errors in parentheses

+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Democratic vote is the baseline category

Table SM8: 2016 ANES voter model

	(1) Abstain		(2) Republican	
Party ID				
Democratic	0.822**	(0.213)	1.424**	(0.353)
Lean Democratic	1.248**	(0.217)	0.790*	(0.384)
Independent	2.210**	(0.236)	2.423**	(0.356)
Lean Republican	2.564**	(0.331)	3.627**	(0.425)
Republican	2.158**	(0.278)	3.143**	(0.372)
Strong Republican	2.178**	(0.441)	4.306**	(0.460)
Ideology				
Liberal	1.383*	(0.596)	0.417	(1.161)
Slightly liberal	1.142+	(0.608)	0.875	(1.114)
Moderate	1.578**	(0.590)	1.663	(1.091)
Slightly conservative	1.512*	(0.613)	2.014+	(1.104)
Conservative	1.781**	(0.680)	2.477*	(1.137)
Extremely conservative	3.151**	(0.969)	4.145**	(1.336)
Male	0.321*	(0.135)	0.0245	(0.167)
Black	-0.390+	(0.229)	-1.235**	(0.464)
Hispanic	0.201	(0.191)	-0.618*	(0.251)
Married	-0.280+	(0.143)	0.187	(0.174)
Income	-0.276**	(0.0704)	-0.207*	(0.0840)
Unemployed	0.238	(0.235)	-0.397	(0.326)
Catholic	-0.288	(0.177)	0.240	(0.228)
Protestant	-0.131	(0.164)	0.353+	(0.200)
Economy				
Stayed same	0.0903	(0.153)	0.467*	(0.225)
Gotten worse	0.672**	(0.210)	1.180**	(0.268)
Interest				
Somewhat interested	-0.584**	(0.218)	-0.0245	(0.284)
Very much interested	-1.357**	(0.223)	-0.201	(0.283)
Education				
High school	-0.0824	(0.524)	-0.149	(0.723)
Some college	-0.374	(0.527)	-0.238	(0.723)
College degree	-0.951+	(0.534)	-0.861	(0.729)
Pres. approval	-1.424**	(0.182)	-2.534**	(0.213)
Constant	0.272	(0.835)	-2.141	(1.374)
N	3482			
Psuedo R^2	0.449			

Standard errors in parentheses

+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Democratic vote is the baseline category

Table SM9: 2020 ANES voter model

	(1) Abstain		(2) Republican	
Party ID				
Democratic	0.193	(0.165)	0.315	(0.395)
Lean Democratic	0.221	(0.158)	0.0498	(0.430)
Independent	1.125**	(0.172)	1.894**	(0.375)
Lean Republican	1.278**	(0.223)	2.813**	(0.405)
Republican	0.952**	(0.232)	2.555**	(0.409)
Strong Republican	1.358**	(0.301)	2.963**	(0.436)
Ideology				
Liberal	-0.182	(0.249)	1.418*	(0.706)
Slightly liberal	-0.158	(0.259)	0.690	(0.715)
Moderate	0.175	(0.233)	1.994**	(0.670)
Slightly conservative	0.149	(0.278)	2.221**	(0.697)
Conservative	0.607+	(0.335)	2.721**	(0.708)
Extremely conservative	1.228**	(0.467)	3.588**	(0.778)
Male	0.0409	(0.105)	-0.284*	(0.135)
Black	0.0669	(0.156)	-0.677+	(0.352)
Hispanic	0.340*	(0.158)	-0.790**	(0.231)
Married	-0.297**	(0.115)	0.0757	(0.156)
Income	-0.0868	(0.0554)	0.126+	(0.0738)
Unemployed	0.0563	(0.221)	0.399	(0.276)
Catholic	-0.371**	(0.141)	-0.119	(0.177)
Protestant	-0.275*	(0.127)	-0.159	(0.160)
Economy				
Stayed same	-0.0481	(0.200)	0.241	(0.224)
Gotten worse	-0.240	(0.181)	-0.262	(0.205)
Interest				
Somewhat interested	-0.633**	(0.151)	-0.403*	(0.200)
Very much interested	-1.246**	(0.150)	-0.508*	(0.197)
Education				
High school	-0.601**	(0.219)	-0.206	(0.307)
Some college	-0.986**	(0.204)	-0.202	(0.288)
College degree	-1.347**	(0.215)	-0.646*	(0.298)
Pres. approval	1.937**	(0.196)	3.611**	(0.209)
Constant	1.005*	(0.391)	-4.783**	(0.848)
N	7646			
Psuedo R^2	0.432			

Standard errors in parentheses

+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Democratic vote is the baseline category