

How Nationalized are American State Publics?

Jack Santucci
Professorial Lecturer, The George Washington University
Senior Lecturer, Western New England University
jack.santucci@gmail.com

May 18, 2025¹

Abstract

How nationalized are American state publics? Three existing approaches to this question are to use election returns, estimate statewide opinion, or study respondents' views on issues individually. This paper studies individual respondents in their state and national contexts by 'estimating' ideal points for more than 180,000 Americans over the period 2016-24. I use these scores to ask how well a revealed liberal-conservative continuum can explain the attitudes of various sociodemographic and regional subgroups in each presidential election year. A regional difference opened up between 2020 and 2024, such that respondents in the Northeast and West now exhibit higher attitude constraint than those in the South and Midwest. However, this may be due to the kinds of people in each place rather than any factor inherent to region. No state registers statistically significant change, but most trend toward higher dimensionality. Most other subgroup relationships are consistent with expectations from the parties and behavior literatures. Others defy them but might be made plausible with a discontent-based theory of events over the past decade or so. Finally, there is prima facie evidence of dealignment within all subgroups (party identification, race, gender, degree attainment, and political knowledge).

¹ Originally prepared April 23, 2025 for the Annual Meeting of the New England Political Science Association. Thanks to Adam S. Myers and Adam Olenn for comments.

Introduction

Nationalization refers to increasing homogeneity of the 50 state party systems, plus DC. Recent scholarship has picked up nationalization across a range of outcomes associated with the study of parties: in state government, of formal party organizations, associated interest-group networks, vote choice, state- or district-level mass opinion, and of attitudes on specific issues. Less attention has been paid to opinion structures within states. Yet the opinion structure is a major component of nationalization.

Opinion nationalization matters because its presence/absence could have consequences throughout the political system. Low or declining levels may signal the emergence of party factions, which then may reshape the parties (DiSalvo 2012) and democratic institutions within which they operate (Ware 2002; Bridges and Kousser 2011; Mickey 2015; Myers 2018; Santucci 2022; Reilly et al. 2023; Boatright 2024). Yet high levels would represent a break with how parties have worked in the United States since about 1900 (Carson et al. 2024). Such a system may not be compatible with the separation of powers and respect for civil rights and liberties at once (Linz 1990; Grumbach 2022; Mainwaring and Drutman 2023). The reason would be that said system lacks the divisions needed to keep coalitions shifting in the “extensive republic” (Madison 1961; compare Taylor et al. 2013).

How nationalized are the 50 state publics? Does nationalization vary by subgroups of interest to the behavior and parties literatures (race, gender, region, education party identification, and political knowledge)? To answer these questions, I use Cooperative Election Study data to project more than 180,000 respondents and their attitudes on ten policy items into a low-dimensional policy space. I focus on the

years 2016-24 because this period was one of major change in the national-party coalitions (Sides et al. 2018; Barber and Pope 2024; Grossmann and Hopkins 2024; Krimmel 2024; Pierson and Schickler 2024). These years also let us analyze the same items over time. This research approach produces individual ‘ideal points’ within states, which then can be studied as indicators of attitude constraint (Converse 1964; Hare 2015; Hare et al. 2018; also see Fujiwara and Liu 2023). The survey items cover basic policy orientations as well as attitudes toward social groups (Mason 2018; Jardina 2019).

Data over time are not available on some issues that probably do activate local interests and therefore vary by state. Trade and gender identity stand out among these as important. Nevertheless, the results are interesting and may point to some dealignment, at least when the respondent scores are subject to t-tests.

I start with a brief review of nationalization work and methodologically similar studies of state politics. This scholarship differs more on interpretation of measures (e.g., magnitude, duration) than whether ‘cracks’ in the party system might be found. I briefly cover why ‘nationalization’ (really, polarization) might be measured at the individual level. Then I describe my data, methods, and results. A final section speculates about what might be causing the dealignment trends uncovered here.

Approaches to the study of nationalization

There are two differences of perspective and one of methodology in the nationalization field. One is over the magnitude of the phenomenon, and the other concerns its permanence. The methodological issue is about the value of aggregation

in constructing measures of nationalization. Most scholars seem to agree that nationalization has occurred when nationally salient issues crowd out information and/or competition on other bases. As far as I know, this characterization originates with Hopkins (2018). Not all scholarship below takes nationalization as its focus, but most studies of policy-making and responsiveness acknowledge it as a potential background constraint.

Recent efforts to measure the observable implications of nationalization have used several units of analysis: aggregate voting behavior (Hopkins 2018; Carson et al. 2024), party platforms (Hopkins et al. 2022), bill texts (Hertel-Fernandez 2019), state legislators' voting records (Shor and McCarty 2022), survey reports of voter knowledge about who is responsible for state policy (Rogers 2023), congruence between roll-call voting and district-level opinion (Rogers 2017), and the correlation of party control with indices of state-policy liberalism in 14 of 16 issue areas (Grumbach 2018).² Lax and Phillips (2012) add national-level salience to the mix, finding for 39 issues that, on average, it pulls state policy away from majority opinion.³

Less directly, parties scholars have pointed to a qualitative change in the organization of the two-party system. Its key components in past decades were state-party organizations, local bosses, and informal networks or 'rings' (Key 1955; Mayhew 1986). Now it is common to hear about the dominance of nationally organized interest-group networks (Pierson and Schickler 2024; Krimmel 2024; Schlozman and Rosenfeld 2024; Kuo 2025).

² The exceptions are criminal justice and education.

³ See Sances (2025) for consistent results on state-level policing reform in the aftermath of Black Lives Matter. This study is an exemplar of good work on individual issues.

Another set of results begins to challenge the nationalization perspective on methodological grounds. The basic idea is that when one aggregates issues and studies them over long periods of time, one does find responsiveness, even if delayed, (Caughey and Warshaw 2022), as well as congruence in the sense that mass policy liberalism stops conservatives from achieving fundamental goals (Grossmann 2020). These results suggest that any ‘muting’ (Hopkins 2018) of local forces may be temporary.

Similarly, the continued role of local forces seems plausible when one takes a disaggregated view of voters, state legislators, and local parties. Studies in this vein have found congressional-level ticket-splitting in individual ballots (Kuriwaki 2024), state legislative policy uniqueness in a large and recent set of bill texts (Kroeger et al. 2022), and, to some extent, heterogeneity in the views of local-party managers who recruit candidates (Doherty et al. 2022).

What one thinks of nationalization depends in part on how they have measured it. One can do so from election results or issues (for a review, see Carson et al. 2024). Then, if one decides to study issues, the question is whether to cluster them — either thematically or temporally — or take a disaggregated approach to studying the current moment. So far, aggregated approaches have led to more optimistic conclusions about democratic responsiveness (Grossmann 2020; Caughey and Warshaw 2022), whereas disaggregated approaches lead either to pessimism (e.g., Lax and Phillips 2012; Rogers 2023) or a sense that the partisan ground may be shifting (e.g., Kuriwaki 2024).

Nationalization as an individual-level phenomenon

To assess how nationalized are the American state publics, this paper models individual-level attitudes in the context of the wider party system.⁴ Recall that most seem to agree that nationalization has occurred when nationally salient issues crowd out information and/or coalition-building on other bases. If those other bases mattered, we might expect many voters to be less consistently liberal or conservative on the nationally salient issues. In other words, some ‘unobserved’ set of attitudes is frustrating coalition formation around the nationally salient ones. Similarly, if national salience means party polarization on some set of issues, we might expect cross-pressure on those issues (and/or attitudes toward groups) to pull different sets of voters in different directions (see, e.g., Green 2020 on national elections; Boudreau et al. 2019 on local elections). In short, a person with a ‘nationalized’ belief system is one whose attitudes are (a) well-summarized in one dimension (b) that is a function of the nationwide liberal-conservative continuum.

What exactly are nationally salient issues? Scholars generally agree that they cluster into three categories: government services, race relations, and cultural/moral controversy (Carsey and Layman 2006; Menchaca 2021; Caughey and Warshaw 2022, 36-42). Further, these three ‘meta issues’ have come to organize party politics so that liberals (conservatives) on one tend to be liberals on the others as well (conservatives), at least among people who are attentive to politics (Kalmoe 2020). Elites polarized first (Poole and Rosenthal 1984; Layman and Carsey 2002; Noel 2014), but large parts of the public have been catching up (Mason 2018; Gidron et al. 2020; Holman and Kalmoe 2021).

⁴ This approach also begins to address Dunleavy’s (1998) concerns about national-sample survey research.

Below, I measure nationalization at the individual level. This is in keeping with a long tradition that views issues and other politically relevant attitudes as “idea elements” that might or might not be organized into liberal and conservative “belief systems” (Converse 1964). Further, within any given person, idea elements should be more left-right organized in proportion to the attention they pay to politics. Less attentive people learn about “what goes with what” from social-group attachments and preferred politicians, with the least attentive showing little ideological organization (Layman and Carsey 2002; Kinder and Kalmoe 2017). More explicitly, Lupton et al. (2015) use similar data and methods to test for varying attitude constraint across five strata of the party system: those who pay the most attention because it is their job to do so (convention delegates; compare Layman et al. 2010), “hyper sophisticates” who exhibit similar constraint, and three more groups of everyday Americans in declining order of their engagement with politics.⁵

Data and methods

To measure the nationalization of state publics, I use data from the Cooperative Election Study (CES) for the years 2016, 2020, and 2024. Unlike other major surveys, the CES was designed to permit statistical inference within congressional districts. As such, it typically contains information on several thousand respondents within each state as well. With respect to my research purpose, the CES’ major drawback is a lack of item continuity relative to flagship national surveys. It nonetheless was possible to

⁵ Technically, Lupton et al. (2015, 372) construct a “political sophistication” scale, which combines measures of self-reported interest, campaign participation, and interviewer assessments of respondent political knowledge.

find ten items asked in all three waves that tap the three key dimensions of Americans' belief systems: government spending, racial attitudes, and views on morality/culture.

In selecting the items, I tried to do three things. First was to get items that appeared in all three waves. Second was to focus on attitudes toward broad policy areas and social groups (Mason 2018; Caughey and Warshaw 2022), not hyper-specific questions about state or national legislation. Third, I tried to capture as many nationally salient issues as possible. To do these things, I first consulted Dagonel's (2022) guide to CES item continuity, then a website of common-content items from political scientist Katie Gaus (2022). Then I checked the 2024 codebooks to make sure each item also appeared in that wave. The ten items include five on government spending, one on immigration, one on gun control, one on racial resentment, one on protecting the environment, and one on abortion. Unfortunately, it was not possible to include items on trade, immigration, gender identity, or sexual preference. Note however that these omissions bias the analysis in favor of finding low dimensionality, both due to the limited number of items and the fact that the omitted topics likely operate differently in different parts of the country.

To scale the items and respondents, I used the ordered optimal classification (OOC) algorithm. OOC is an issue-scale extension of a classifier (OC) originally envisioned during the development of NOMINATE (Poole and Rosenthal 1997; Poole 2000). Whereas NOMINATE literally estimates parameters for items (roll calls) and respondents (legislators), OC simply orders them from left to right in one dimension. This ordering reflects the best possible locations for items and respondents so that people to one side of an item respond one way, and people on the other side do the

opposite. In two (or more) dimensions, and for a given item, OC places respondents on either side of a cutting line (or plane). The resulting ‘mesh’ of cutting lines (planes) creates a set of polygons (polytopes) that best separate respondents from each other on all dimensions modeled. So-called ideal points represent randomly chosen coordinates within each polygon (polytope). OOC extends this logic to items with multiple, ordered response options by constructing a cutting line (plane) for the $c-1$ response categories (c) of each item. OOC has been used to study attitude constraint in the 2015 CES (Hare et al. 2018) and item dimensionality in the 2016 Voter Study Group and CES surveys (Santucci and Dyck 2022).⁶ The runtime for a one-dimensional procedure with 185,486 respondents was 4.8 hours.⁷ For a two-dimensional fit, it was 186.2 hours.

Figure 1 below gives the aggregate result of the two-dimensional procedure. Blue circles represent Democratic identifiers, red circles represent Republican identifiers, and gray circles are for Independents (including leaners). Note that there is quite a bit of clustering. This can be seen in what sometimes appears as a very dark circle; this actually represents several respondents in the same location. Also shown is the normal vector for each item included. For a given item, this can be thought of a ‘direction of agreement.’ Cutting lines (planes) run perpendicular to a normal vector. Therefore, the response categories for a given item could be represented by $c-1$ cutting lines at 90-degree angles to the vector. Note that cutting lines might not appear along the vector as plotted. Consider healthcare and education. If one looks toward the figure’s bottom right, the patterning of respondents suggests the presence of ‘extreme’

⁶ At the time, the CES was known as the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES).

⁷ OOC omitted 114 respondents because they answered fewer than three of the ten items.

views on these items.⁸ Finally, at the end of each normal vector is the percentage of responses correctly classified. All but three items register at 90 percent or greater: gun control (86%), immigration (82%), and abortion (73%).⁹ These fits are good, especially because the analysis was of issue scales rather than binary choices. Figure 1 thus yo up suggests a policy space with two main dimensions, and Table A.1 confirms this using the standard measure of item fit, proportional reduction in error (PRE). The primary, left-right dimension taps attitudes toward social groups and the environment. The top-bottom dimension taps views about spending priorities.¹⁰

The quantifies of interest in the analyses below are as follows. First, to measure a person's level of nationalization, I ask what *percent of their responses are correctly classified* (PCC) by the one-dimensional model. In essence, PCC says to what extent the national issue dimension explains their belief system. One could do the same with PRE (and probably should¹¹), but the correct-classification rate is more intuitive for readers. The second quantity is the *mean PCC by subgroup*. This allows for straightforward plotting over time. It also permits difference-of-means tests, which I use to do two things. One is to ask about differences among regions within periods. The other is to ask whether change from 2016-24 was statistically significant within some subgroup.

⁸ If one wanted, one could (re)code all items so that increasing values consistently represent what we might assume to be conservative (or liberal) positions. I did not do that in this case, instead preserving agreement/disagreement as the respondent saw it.

⁹ Of these, the first two results are likely due to question wording. The result for abortion likely reflects the third 'morality' dimension that often emerges with factor analysis and similar techniques.

¹⁰ It was necessary to multiply the first-dimension respondent scores and x-coordinates of the normal vectors by -1 to correct for rotational invariance (Armstrong et al. 2014).

¹¹ PRE penalizes model fit for the ease of the classification task. For example, a no-dimensional model probably would do well with a scale item on attitudes toward pizza.

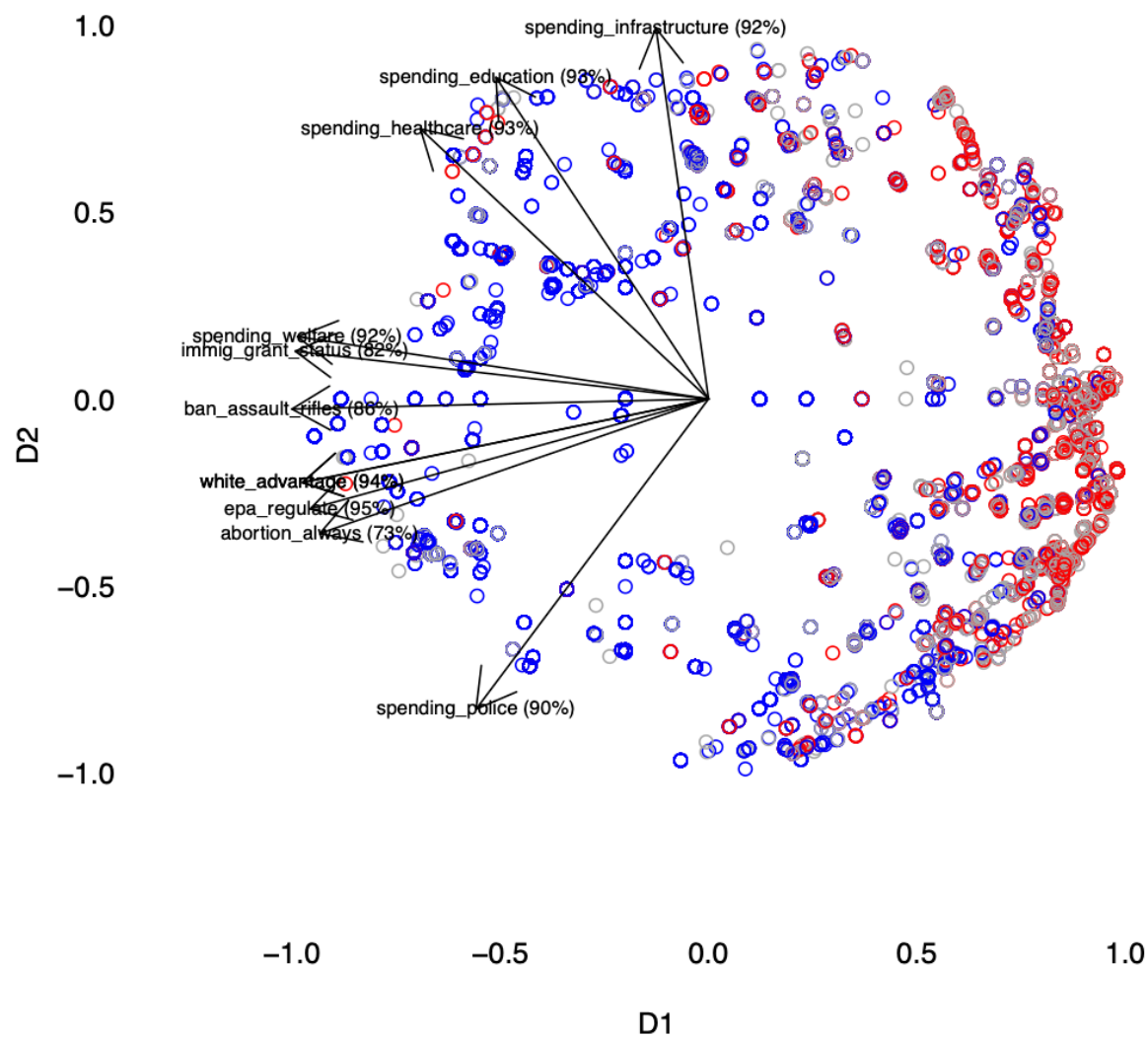


Figure 1: Respondent coordinates with item normal vectors, common space for 2016-24.

Subgroups and prior expectations

Below I plot mean PCC in each survey year for the following subgroups: race, gender, party identification (now including leaners with partisans; see Keith et al. 1992; Klar and Krupnikov 2016), college degree by race, census region, and whether the respondent can correctly name the party with a U.S. House majority going into the respective election. The last item is one of a few commonly used to gauge a respondent's level of political awareness. I also plot mean PCC within each of the 50

states, plus DC, in keeping with this paper's original research question (Figure A.1 in the appendix). To get a sense of variation, the state plots in Figure A.1 are sorted in decreasing order of their 2016 mean PCC levels. Assuming there has been no depolarization, the following expectations emerge from the literature.

1. Race — Whites should score low because they are divided in their party identification (Dyck and Johnson 2022), and they have become more divided over attitudes toward out-groups and in-group favoritism (Jardina 2019). Notably, the racial-resentment item I scaled is the one on “special favors.” Black Americans should score high because the analysis omits some issues (religiosity, military) that many view as associated with conservatism but work differently in that subgroup (Philpot 2017). I do not have strong priors for the other groups (Latino, AAPI) other than to note that their party identification has been more volatile, possibly due to unique socialization experiences (Dyck and Johnson 2022).
2. Gender — I do not have strong priors based on the literature. However, many gender issues were highly salient over the period and changed the composition of the parties. One of these was abortion, which gained salience as President Trump began to staff the federal judiciary. Another was sexual misconduct (Holman and Kalmoe 2021).
3. Party identification — Democrats should manifest consistently higher levels of attitude constraint for two reasons. First, educational attainment now concentrates in that party (Barber and Pope 2024; Grossmann and Hopkins 2024), educational attainment predicts social liberalism (Scott 2022), and the party has emphasized such positions in recent years. Second, party is widely thought to be the central

“idea element” in Americans’ belief systems, and party leadership transmits the meanings of ‘liberal’ and ‘conservative’ to voters over time (Lenz 2012). Yet Donald Trump (R) changed the meaning of ‘conservative’ among activists (Hopkins and Noel 2021), and this may take time to filter down to the less engaged. I do not have priors for pure independents.

4. College degree by race — I disaggregated education in this way because research on the period 2008-20 shows that high-education whites have realigned while blacks and Latinos have not (Barber and Pope 2024). Race is coded white/non-white for this test. I do not have priors.
5. Region — This is an important set of tests because it gets to the heart of nationalization. A long tradition in political science holds that the party system is fundamentally decentralized (e.g., Mayhew 1986). Some attribute regional variation to post-Civil War patterns of party-system and economic development (Shefter 1983). As Grossmann (2020, 11) notes, “studies of policy output differences across states tend to incorporate a variety of factors beyond partisanship: policy-specific needs and histories; interest group influence; judicial and executive power; public and elite opinion; political culture; economic context; institutional developments; and electoral competition.”
6. House majority — Those who answer correctly should have higher average PCC because this item is one marker of political sophistication (Lupton et al. 2015). Further, those who can answer this question tend to be very partisan and thus likely to be more constrained (Zaller 1992). Dyck and Pearson-Merkowitz (2023) argue that people acquire such information precisely to participate in politics.

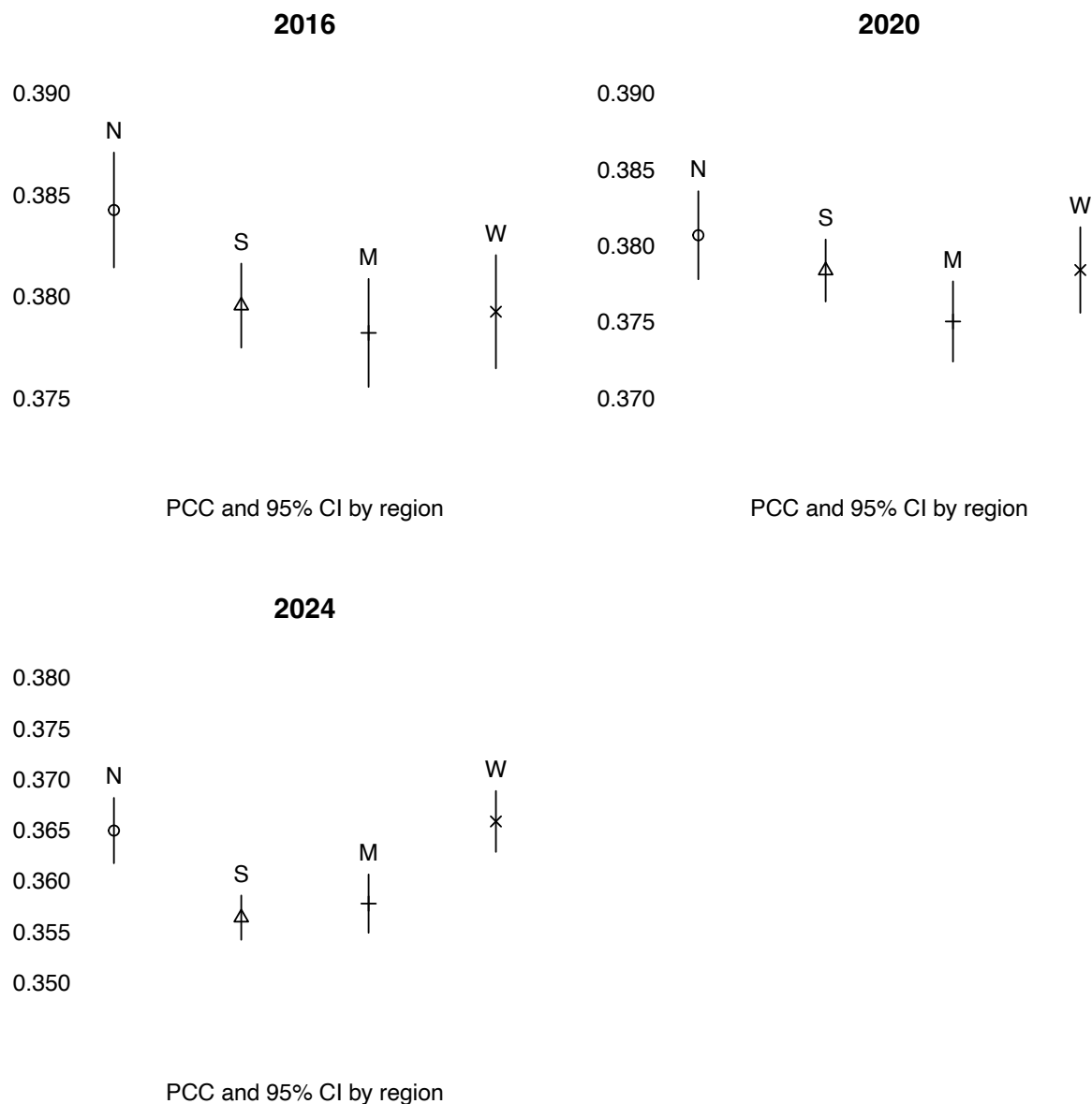


Figure 2: Mean PCC with 95% confidence intervals by census region. N=Northeast, S=South, M=Midwest, W=West.

7. The 50 states plus DC — No specific priors.

Results and discussion

Below I present results for the two sets of tests of interest. One concerns differences among regions for each survey year. The other concerns inter-temporal

differences within subgroups. In short, a statistically significant difference in mean model fit opened up in 2024. For that year, one dimension better fits the North and West than it does the South and Midwest (Figure 2). Meanwhile, subgroup tests for change from 2016-24 show statistically significant decline within each (except nonbinary gender identification, for which such a test was not possible). For the 50 states (plus DC) taken individually, none registers statistically significant change.

Three interpretations of the results for inter-regional differences come to mind. One is that the party system now pits the coasts against the South and Midwest. If so, this is *prima facie* evidence for de-nationalization. Another possibility concerns candidates. Recall that the 2016 Democratic presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, was a New York State resident at the time. In 2024, the Democratic candidate was Californian. Note also that the Biden/Harris ticket in 2020 (Delaware, California) might have brought the South and West closer to the Northeast in that year. If voters form their belief systems in response to cues from (dis)preferred candidates, these results may be due to candidate effects rather than the start of a de-nationalization trend. A third possibility concerns the demographic profiles of the regions themselves. In other words, it is the kinds of people in each region that matter.

Turning to the tests of subgroup differences, several results defy the expectations above or at least are interesting. First, Black respondents exhibited the greatest decline in attitude constraint, moving from first to second place, now behind Latinos. Second, average constraint among men was higher than among women in 2016. This may relate to the role of gender in that campaign and potentially the realignment of Republican women toward the Democratic Party. Third, non-college,

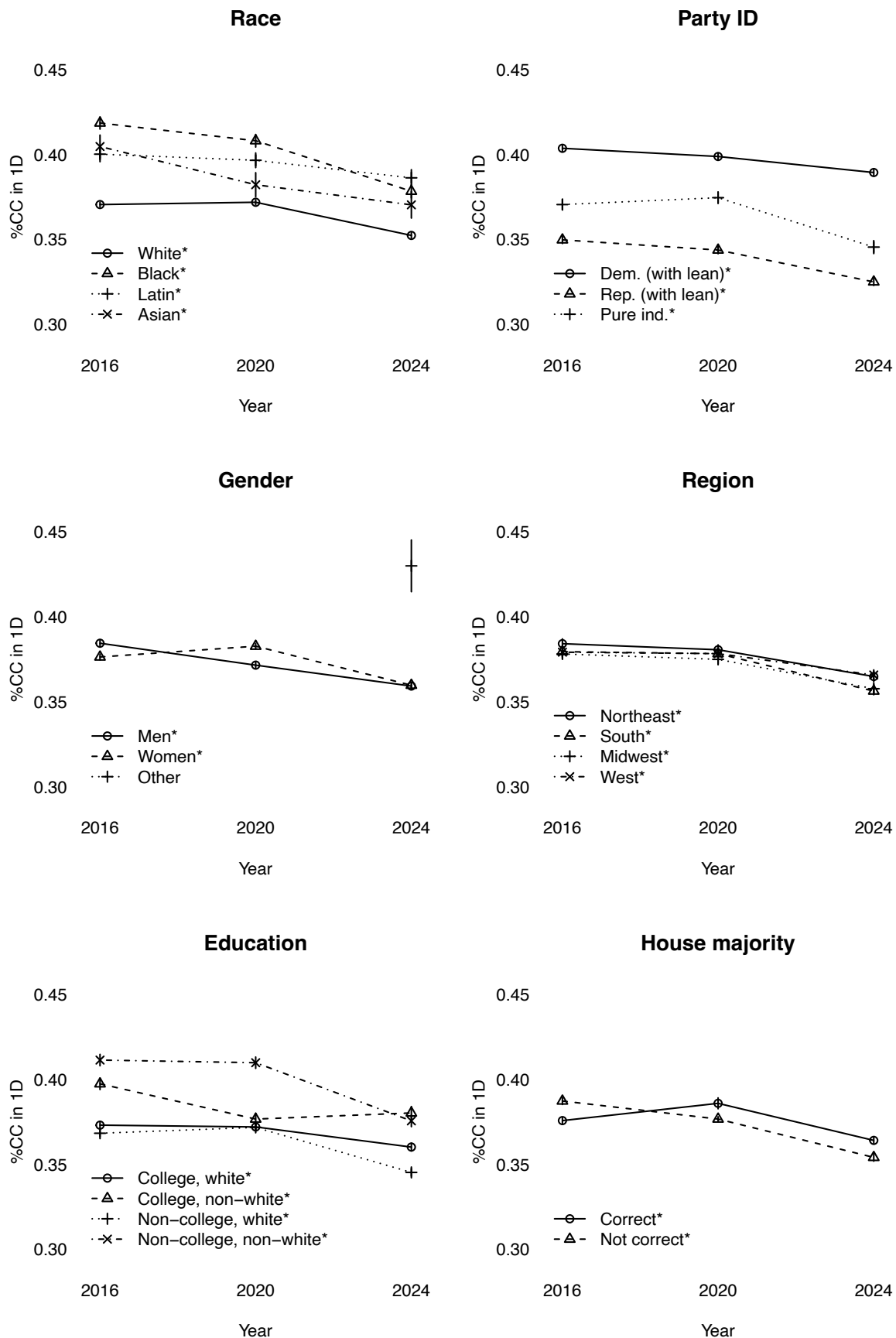


Figure 3: Mean PCC by subgroup with 95% CIs. Asterisk = significant change from 2016-24.

non-white respondents show the greatest decline in average constraint, moving from most constrained to converging with college-educated, non-white respondents. Fourth, those who could not answer the House-majority question correctly show more constraint in 2016 than those who could. The other years follow the opposite pattern. Here, two possibilities come to mind. One is that the 2016 election (and Trump campaign in particular) mobilized many people with little prior experience or interest in politics. Another is that voters with high constraint levels on the issues in this analysis might have been misinformed about which party actually controlled the House: Republicans at the time. Whatever might be going on, I plan to investigate these issues in future work.

Conclusion

This paper asked about the nationalization levels of state publics. It attempted to describe those by projecting more than 180,000 respondents and their attitudes on ten survey items tapping broad policy attitudes as well as attitudes toward groups, 2016-24, into a single policy (or latent-ideological) space. This permits us to study how well a single dimension organizes the “idea elements” of individual belief systems within and across states. (Note again that the set of items chosen likely biases this analysis in favor of finding low dimensionality.) Then, with individual-level estimates in hand, one can compute averages and associated confidence intervals by subgroup of interest.

With respect to nationalization specifically, the 2024 data show new regional differences. One dimension performs less well in the census-defined South and Midwest than it does in the Northeast and West.

Finally, the 51 state-level results are broadly consistent with the results for census region. Sorting these in declining order of 2016 mean PCC, the top ten states are in the Northeast and Deep South (MD, HI, CT, DC, NY, MA, NJ, CA, GA, and MS). The bottom ten states are less regionally clustered (ND, RI, CO, MT, ID, UT, ME, AK, SD, and SC), at least for 2016.

One of the most interesting results is the increase in dimensionality across subgroups. Two possible explanations come to mind. One is that the analysis has omitted some issue(s) on which the party system recently polarized. Even if so, it is not clear that including this/these issues would change the substantive conclusion about depolarization. Consider the case of trade. Prior work using 19 items shows that trade was *least* correlated with revealed, left-right ideology in both 2012 and 2016 (Santucci 2020). Say that the parties had polarized on trade in a continued process of “conflict extension” (Layman and Carsey 2002). For dimensionality to stay as high as it was in 2016 or 2020, activation (or communication) of trade attitudes would have had to *not disrupt* issue constraint on other issues. Yet this analysis did not include trade, and something clearly disrupted attitudes on the issues that were included. The same logic should hold for other omitted issues — except one.

Another possibility is that recent electoral competition has mobilized latent political discontent against a range of social groups now (once?) aligned with the Democratic Party. Discontent typically is measured with items tapping external efficacy

(Craig et al. 1990), and similar measures appear among those used to construct indices of populist attitudes (Akkerman et al. 2014, 1331). As of 2016, these items cross-cut the liberal-conservative divide (Santucci and Dyck 2022). Uscinski et al. (2021) produce consistent results for 2019-20 with a different set of items. More recently, Jung (2025) shows with data from the CES that populist attitudes were correlated in 2022 with three socially conservative positions: pro-gun, anti-abortion, and anti-immigrant (compare Ivaldi and Mazzoleni 2025). This results trajectory suggests realignment toward the right on the issue of the political system itself (see Schimpf et al. 2024 on the stability of such attitudes). Further, Petersen et al. (2023) show that socially marginalized people (also see Oliver and Rahn 2016) are more likely to express a “need for chaos” and then share hostile rumors about social groups they dislike. Perhaps those who are likely to share such rumors also are likely to change the sorts of attitudes they express in surveys. In turn, a realignment based on anti-system attitudes might explain some of the theoretical anomalies above. I look forward to investigating many of these issues in future work.

References

Akkerman, Agnes, Cas Mudde, and Andrej Zaslove. 2014. "How Populist Are the People? Measuring Populist Attitudes in Voters." *Comparative Political Studies* 47 (9): 1324-1353. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414013512600>.

Armstrong II, David A., Ryan Bakker, Royce Carroll, Christopher Hare, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. *Analyzing Spatial Models of Choice and Judgment with R*. CRC Press. <https://doi.org/10.1201/b16486>.

Barber, Michael and Jeremy C. Pope. 2024. "The Crucial Role of Race in Twenty-First Century Realignment." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 88 (1): 149-160. <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfad063>.

Boatright, Robert G. 2024. *Reform and Retrenchment: A Century of Efforts to Fix Primary Elections*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197774083.001.0001>.

Boudreau, Cheryl, Christopher S. Elmendorf, and Scott A. MacKenzie. 2019. "Racial or Spatial Voting? The Effects of Candidate Ethnicity and Ethnic Group Endorsements in Local Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 63 (1): 5-20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12401>.

Bridges, Amy and Thad Kousser. 2011. "Where Politicians Gave Power to the People: Adoption of the Citizen Initiative in the U.S. States." *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 11 (2): 167-197. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532440011406232>.

Carson, Jamie, Joel Sievert, and Ryan D. Williamson. 2024. *Nationalized Politics: Evaluating Electoral Politics Across Time*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197669655.001.0001>.

Carsey, Thomas M. and Geoffrey C. Layman. 2006. "Changing Sides or Changing Minds? Party Identification and Policy Preferences in the American Electorate." *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (2): 464-477. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2006.00196.x>.

Caughey, Devin and Christopher Warshaw. 2022. *Dynamic Democracy: Public Opinion, Elections, and Policy Making in the American States*. University of Chicago Press. Caughey and Warshaw 2022, 36-42

Converse, Philip E. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." In *Ideology and Discontent*, edited by David E. Apter. The Free Press of Glencoe.

Craig, Stephen C., Richard G. Niemi, and Glenn E. Silver. 1990. "Political Efficacy and Trust: A Report on the NES Pilot Study Items." *Political Behavior* 12 (3): 289-314. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00992337>.

Dagonel, Angelo. 2021. "Cumulative CES Policy Preferences." Harvard Dataverse. <https://doi.org/doi:10.7910/DVN/OSXDQO>.

DiSalvo, Daniel. 2012. *Engines of Change: Party Factions in American Politics, 1868-2010*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199891702.001.0001>.

Doherty, David, Connor M. Dowling, and Michael G. Miller. 2022. *Small Power: How Local Parties Shape Elections*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197605004.001.0001>.

Dunleavy, Patrick. 1998. "Political Behavior: Institutional and Experiential Approaches." In *A New Handbook of Political Science*, edited by Robert E. Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingemann. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/0198294719.003.0010>.

Dyck, Joshua J. and Gregg B. Johnson. 2022. "Constructing a New Measure of Macropartisanship Disaggregated by Race and Ethnicity." *The Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics* 7 (3): 433-459. <https://doi.org/10.1017/rep.2021.35>.

Dyck, Joshua J. and Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz. 2023. *The Power of Partisanship*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197623787.001.0001>.

Fujiwara Takanori and Tzu-Ping Liu. 2023. "Contrastive Multiple Correspondence Analysis (cMCA): Using Contrastive Learning to Identify Latent Subgroups in Political Parties." *PLoS ONE* 18 (7): e0287180. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0287180>.

Gidron, Noam, James Adams, and Will Horne. 2020. *American Affective Polarization in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108914123>.

Green, Jon. 2020. "Floating Policy Voters in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election." *Electoral Studies* 67. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2019.03.004>.

Grossmann, Matt. 2020. *Red State Blues: How the Conservative Revolution Stalled in the States*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108569187>.

Grossmann, Matt and David A. Hopkins. 2024. *Polarized by Degrees: How the Diploma Divide and the Culture War Transformed American Politics*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009057141>.

Grumbach, Jacob M. 2018. "From Backwaters to Major Policymakers: Policy Polarization in the States, 1970–2014." *Perspectives on Politics* 16 (2):416-435. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S153759271700425X>.

Grumbach, Jacob M. 2022. *Laboratories Against Democracy: How National Parties Transformed State Politics*. Princeton University Press.

Hare, Christopher. 2015. *Constrained Citizens? Ideology and the American Voter*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Georgia. https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/hare_christopher_201505_phd.pdf.

Hare, Christopher, Tzu-Ping Liu, and Robert N. Lupton. 2018. "What Ordered Optimal Classification Reveals about Ideological Structure, Cleavages, and Polarization in the American Mass Public." *Public Choice* 176: 57–78. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11127-018-0540-6>.

Hertel-Fernandez, Alex. 2019. *State Capture: How Conservative Activists, Big Businesses, and Wealthy Donors Reshaped the American States – and the Nation*. Oxford University Press.

Holman, Mirya R. and Nathan P. Kalmoe. 2021. "Partisanship in the #MeToo Era." *Perspectives on Politics* 22 (1):44-61. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592721001912>.

Hopkins, Daniel J. 2018. *The Increasingly United States: How and Why American Political Behavior Nationalized*. University of Chicago Press.

Hopkins, Daniel J. and Hans Noel. 2022. "Trump and the Shifting Meaning of 'Conservative': Using Activists' Pairwise Comparisons to Measure Politicians' Perceived Ideologies." *American Political Science Review* 116 (3):1133-1140. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055421001416>.

Hopkins, Daniel J., Eric Schickler, and David L. Azizi. 2022. "From Many Divides, One? The Polarization and Nationalization of American State Party Platforms, 1918–2017." *Studies in American Political Development* 36 (1): 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0898588X22000013>.

Ivaldi, Gilles and Oscar Mazzoleni. 2025. "Producerist Populist Attitudes and Electoral Support for Populism in the USA and Western Europe." *Socio-Economic Review* 23 (1) 25-50. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwae034>.

Jardina, Ashley. 2019. *White Identity Politics*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108645157>.

Jung, Yujin J. 2025. "Navigating Populism in America: Unveiling the Socioeconomic and Ideological Roots of Populist Attitudes." *Social Science Quarterly* 106 (2). <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.13488>.

Kalmoe, Nathan P. 2020. "Uses and Abuses of Ideology in Political Psychology." *Political Psychology* 41 (4): 771-793. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12650>.

Keith, Bruce, David B. Magleby, Candice J. Nelson, Elizabeth A. Orr, Mark C. Westlye, and Raymond E. Wolfinger. 1992. *The Myth of the Independent Voter*. University of California Press.

Key, V.O. 1955. *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups* (3rd edition). Thomas Y. Crowell Company.

Kinder, Donald R. and Nathan P. Kalmoe. 2017. *Neither Liberal nor Conservative: Ideological Innocence in the American Public*. University of Chicago Press.

Klar, Samara and Yanna Krupnikov. 2016. *Independent Politics: How American Disdain for Parties Leads to Political Inaction*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316471050>.

Krimmel, Katherine. 2024. *Divergent Democracy: How Policy Positions Came to Dominate Party Competition*. Princeton University Press.

Kroeger, Mary A., Andrew Karch, and Timothy Callaghan. 2022. "Model Bills, State Imitation, and the Political Safeguards of Federalism." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 47 (4): 855-884. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lsq.12373>.

Kuo, Didi. 2024. *The Great Retreat: How Political Parties Should Behave and Why They Don't*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197664193.001.0001>.

Kuriwaki, Shiro. 2024. "Ticket Splitting in a Nationalized Era." *The Journal of Politics*, early view. <https://doi.org/10.1086/734263>.

Lax, Jeffrey R. and Justin H. Phillips. 2012. "The Democratic Deficit in the States." *American Journal of Political Science* (56) 1: 148–166. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2011.00537.x>.

Layman, Geoffrey C. and Thomas M. Carsey. 2002. "Party Polarization and 'Conflict Extension' in the American Electorate." *American Journal of Political Science* 46 (4): 786-802. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3088434>.

Layman, Geoffrey C., Thomas M. Carsey, John C. Green, Richard Herrera, and Rosalyn Cooperman. 2010. "Activists and Conflict Extension in American Party Politics." *American Political Science Review* 104 (2): 324-46. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305541000016X>.

Lenz, Gabriel S. 2012. *Follow the Leader? How Voters Respond to Politicians' Policies and Performance*. University of Chicago Press.

Linz, Juan J. 1990. "The Perils of Presidentialism." *Journal of Democracy* 1 (1): 51-69. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/225694>.

Lupton, Robert N., William M. Myers, and Judd R. Thornton. 2015. "Political Sophistication and the Dimensionality of Elite and Mass Attitudes, 1980-2004." *The Journal of Politics* 77 (2): 368-380. <https://doi.org/10.1086/679493>.

Madison, James. 1961. "Federalist No. 10." In *The Federalist Papers*, edited by Clinton Rossiter. New American Library.

Mainwaring, Scott and Lee Drutman. 2023. "PR and Presidentialism: Yes, We Can." *Democracy Journal*. <https://democracyjournal.org/magazine/70/pr-and-presidentialism-yes-we-can>.

Mason, Lilliana. 2018. *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*. University of Chicago Press.

Mayhew, David R. 1986. *Placing Parties in American Politics: Organization, Electoral Settings, and Government Activity in the Twentieth Century*. Princeton University Press.

Menchaca, Marcos. 2023 [2021]. "Are Americans Polarized on Issue Dimensions?" *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 33 (2): 228-246. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2021.1910954>.

Mickey, Robert. 2015. *Paths Out of Dixie: The Democratization of Authoritarian Enclaves in America's Deep South, 1944-1972*. Princeton University Press.

Myers, Adam S. 2018. "The Failed Diffusion of the Unicameral State Legislature, 1934-1944." *Studies in American Political Development* 32 (2): 217-35. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0898588X18000135>.

Noel, Hans. 2014. *Political Parties and Political Ideologies in America*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139814775>.

Oliver, J. Eric and Wendy M. Rahn. 2016. "Rise of the *Trumpenvolk*: Populism in the 2016 Election." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 667 (1): 189-206. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716216662639>.

Petersen, Michael Bang, Mathias Osmundsen, and Kevin Arceneaux. 2023. "The 'Need for Chaos' and Motivations to Share Hostile Political Rumors." *American Political Science Review* 117 (4): 1486-1505. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055422001447>.

Philpot, Tasha S. 2017. *Conservative but Not Republican: The Paradox of Party Identification and Ideology among African Americans*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316687185>.

Pierson, Paul and Eric Schickler. 2024. *Partisan Nation: The Dangerous New Logic of American Politics in a Nationalized Era*. University of Chicago Press.

Poole, Keith T. "Nonparametric Unfolding of Binary Choice Data." *Political Analysis* 8 (3): 211-237. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.pan.a029814>.

Poole, Keith T. and Howard Rosenthal. 1984. "The Polarization of American Politics." *The Journal of Politics* 46 (4): 1061-1079. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2131242>.

Poole, Keith T. and Howard Rosenthal. 1997. *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll-Call Voting*. Cambridge University Press.

Reilly, Benjamin, David Lublin, and Glenn Wright. 2023. "Alaska's New Electoral System: Countering Polarization or 'Crooked as Hell'?" *California Journal of Politics and Policy* 15 (1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.5070/P2cjpg15160081>.

Rogers, Steven. 2017. "Electoral Accountability for State Legislative Roll Calls and Ideological Representation." *American Political Science Review* 111 (3): 555-571. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055417000156>.

Rogers, Steven. 2023. *Accountability in State Legislatures*. University of Chicago Press.

Sances, Michael W. 2025. "The Politics of Police Reform in the States." *State Politics & Policy Quarterly*, early version. <https://doi.org/10.1017/spq.2024.35>.

Santucci, Jack. 2020. "Did the Party System Change from 2012-2016?" *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, early version. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2020.1794884>.

Santucci, Jack. 2022. *More Parties or No Parties: The Politics of Electoral Reform in America*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197630655.001.0001>.

Santucci, Jack and Joshua J. Dyck. 2022. "The Structure of American Political Discontent." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 86 (2): 381-392. <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfac009>.

Schimpf, Christian H., Alexander Wuttke, and Harald Schoen. 2024. "Neither a Trait nor Wildly Fluctuating: On the Stability of Populist Attitudes and its Implications for Empirical Research." *British Journal of Political Science* 54: 979-992. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S00071234230004923>.

Schlozman, Daniel and Sam Rosenfeld. 2024. *The Hollow Parties: The Many Pasts and Disordered Present of American Party Politics*. Princeton University Press.

Scott, Ralph. 2022. "Does University Make You More Liberal? Estimating the Within-individual Effects of Higher Education on Political Values." *Electoral Studies* 77. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2022.102471>.

Shefter, Martin. 1983. "Regional Receptivity to Reform: The Legacy of the Progressive Era." *Political Science Quarterly* 98 (3): 459-483. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2150498>.

Shor, Boris and Nolan McCarty. 2022. "Two Decades of Polarization in American State Legislatures." *Journal of Political Institutions and Political Economy* (3): 3-4: 343-370. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1561/113.000000063>.

Sides, John, Michael Tessler, and Lynn Vavreck. 2018. *Identity Crisis: The 2016 Presidential Campaign and the Battle for the Meaning of America*. Princeton University Press.

Taylor, Steven L., Matthew Soberg Shugart, Arend Lijphart, and Bernard Grofman. 2014. *A Different Democracy: American Government in a 31-Country Perspective*. Yale University Press.

Uscinski, Joseph E., Adam M. Enders, Michelle I. Seelig, Casey A. Klofstad, John R. Funchion, Caleb Everett, Stefan Wuchty, Kamal Premaratne, and Manohar N. Murthi. 2021. "American Politics in Two Dimensions: Partisan and Ideological Identities versus Anti-Establishment Orientations." *American Journal of Political Science* 65 (4): 877-895. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12616>.

Ware, Alan. 2002. *The American Direct Primary: Party Institutionalization and Transformation in the North*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511509933>.

Zaller, John R. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511818691>.

Appendix

Item	PRE 1D	PRE 2D	Improve
spending_infrastructure	0.25	0.92	0.67
spending_police	0.34	0.90	0.57
spending_education	0.49	0.93	0.44
spending_healthcare	0.55	0.93	0.38
spending_welfare	0.54	0.92	0.37
ban_assault_rifles	0.53	0.85	0.32
abortion_always	0.43	0.73	0.30
immig_grant_status	0.52	0.82	0.29
epa_regulate	0.68	0.95	0.27
white_advantage	0.78	0.94	0.16

Table A.1: Proportional reduction in error (PRE) in one and two dimensions for all items, sorted in descending order of gains from modeling a second dimension.

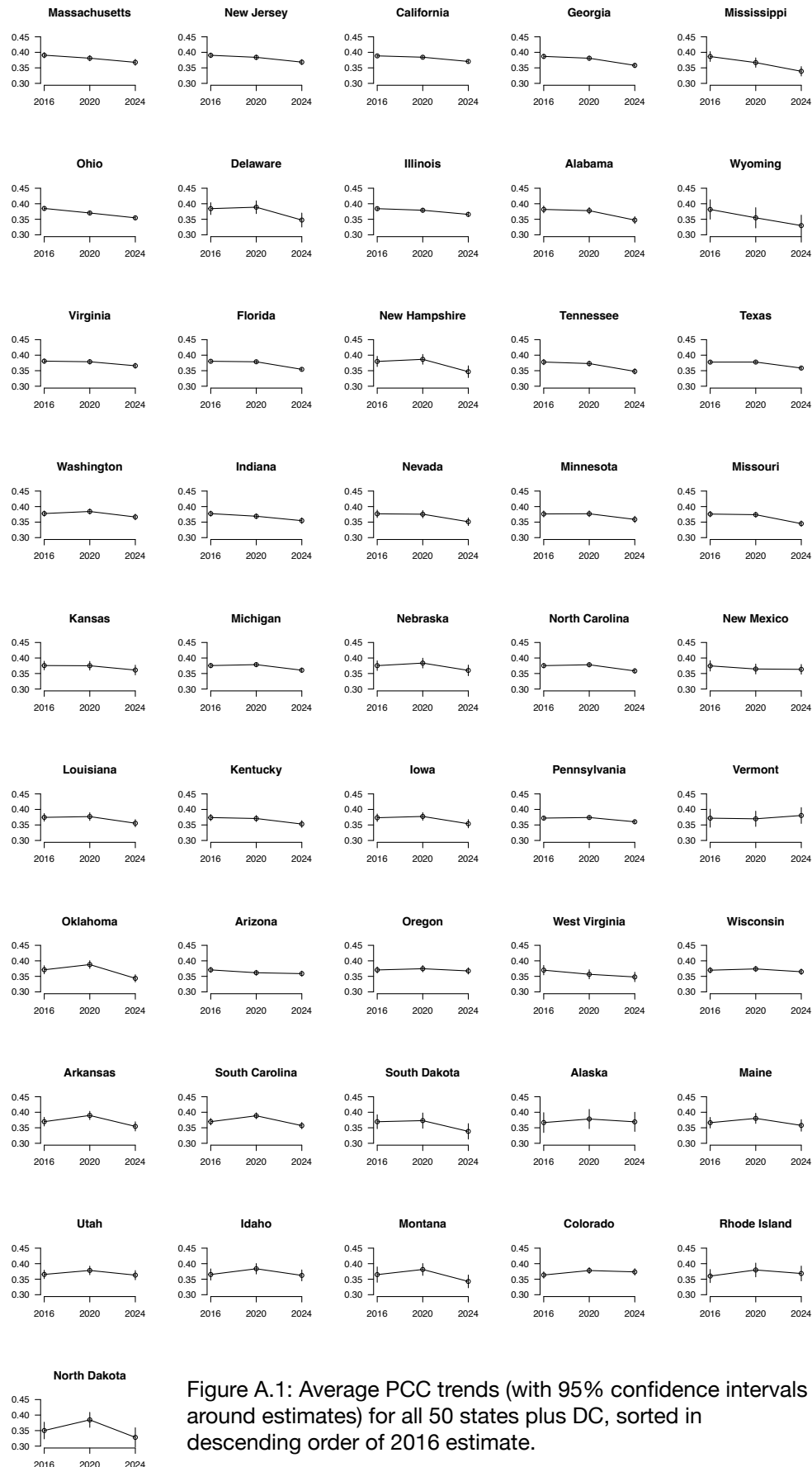


Figure A.1: Average PCC trends (with 95% confidence intervals around estimates) for all 50 states plus DC, sorted in descending order of 2016 estimate.