

Social Basis of American
voting:
adult presentation

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The 1920s

- GOP domination of gov't
- “The Business of America is Business”
– Coolidge



Voting Alignments in the 1920s

Republican Party Support from
Northern White Protestants (esp those were

- rich
- in rural areas and small towns.

Why did they vote Repub?

- They were more affluent and GOP supported business
- Culturally conservative (e.g often opposed to drinking alcohol) AND
- Resented other groups who had recently immigrated

This gave GOP a solid majority

Democratic Party support from disparate groups

- Catholics
- Jews (who also gave support to Socialists)
- Southern Whites

These groups were all poorer and felt excluded from status

Southern whites were also committed to white supremacy (and Democrats accepted that policy)

Racial Minorities

Black Americans: voted Republican

- GOP had ended slavery and was more favorable to Blacks than Dems were
 - W Wilson and Race
- but most Blacks lived in South and were not allowed to vote

Other minorities were minuscule

Major Political Issues Dividing Parties: 1920s

Immigration:

- GOP passes 1924 law, imposing national quotas and favoring people from NW Europe (primarily Protestant)
- Prohibition
 - GOP favors it
 - Dems Oppose

The Depression

- By 1932, output was 2/3 of 1929 and 25% unemployment.
- Repub Pres Hoover's response: "Things will fix themselves"



- FD Roosevelt wins by landslide in 1932 and brings in Dem Congress



Major policies of FD Roosevelt's New Deal

- public spending to create jobs and for infrastructure: roadsparks, airports
- Social Security Act
 - old age insurance
 - unemployment insurance
 - federally subsidized programs of public assistance for elderly poor, blind, dependent children (AFDC) (“Welfare)
- Wagner act (guaranteeing labor the right to collective bargaining)
- Insured bank deposits and regulation of securities exchange

Political Consequences of New Deal

- Blacks become majority Dem
 - because many were helped by policies aiding poor-
 - but most were in South and not allowed to vote
- Many working class northern White Protestants became Dems (esp. those in Labor Unions)

% Dem by SES (socio-econ status) and Religion: 1936 Pres Election

SES	North White Prot	Catholic
High (profess & Mgr)	35	69
Medium (skilled worker and lower white collar	48	81
Low (semi & unskilled & farm)	60	83

Elections of 1940-1960

- Decreased Polarization- as GOP Pres candidates accepted the new Deal
 - Ike quote on New Deal



1940-1960

- Alignment stayed mostly the same as in 1930s
- **Dems:** Catholics, Jews, Unionized Working Class, Blacks, Southern Whites



- **GOP:** Non-Unionized Northern Protestants
- But change is about to come



Krugman's explanation for political change

- **Southern Whites Started Voting Republican**
- why Southern Whites changed their voting
 - Racial Politics but also rise of other issues
 - Social Cultural and Environment
 - also see changes in behavior of other groups

Race and Realignment

LBJ and Dem Party supported laws to



- outlaw discrimination in employment and public accommodations (passed 1964)
- Guarantee vote to Blacks in South (passed 1965)
 - Both of above received substantial GOP support in Congress

- LBJ and Dems provide more aid (including Welfare) to the poor

Republicans move to the Right

Republicans nominate Goldwater who is on the Right Wing of Party –

- opposing Civil Rights Act,
- favoring the end of Social Security and opposing Medicare.



LBJ (Dem) wins by landslide

- In part because of fear that Goldwater would get us into a war
 - Dems received over 90% of Black vote
 - BUT Southern Whites start shifting to Republicans
 - Goldwater won 5 deep South states overwhelmingly, while LBJ won rest of south
- The Southern White shift gets stronger later

Racial Conflict

- Parts of Black movement moved toward violence in late 1960s
- Urban Ghetto riots (eg Detroit in 1967) from



- Problems with police
- Housing discrimination
- segregated schools with poor facilities

Liberal Dem response to racial problems

- affirmative action for minorities (and women)
- school bussing for racial balance

Other major conflicts and problems

- Viet Nam War (increasing frustration on both Left and Right)



- increase of crime and use of welfare

Growth of Counter culture that

- advocates drugs
- Opposes conventional jobs and sexual monogamy
- “Turn on Tune in Drop Out”



Response of Nixon and most of GOP

Appeal to White resentment over

- Racial issues
- Urban Riots,
- Affirmative Action
- increasing crime,



GOP also appealed to

Resentment over

- counter-culture,
- anti-war movement



Response of White Voters

- By the late 1970s
 - Large majority of Southern Whites support Repubs esp. in Pres elections
 - Many working class and middle class whites in North desert Dems on issues of *welfare* and *crime*
 - Feel that their taxes are paying for programs for undeserving poor

Election of Reagan (Repub)

who promised

- Lower taxes (esp for rich)
- Less regulation of business
- Less government spending esp on programs for poor



Social Cultural Issues starting late 1960's

- (1) Women's Rights
- (2) Right to Abortion
- (3) LGBT Rights
- (1) and (2) were initially not highly partisan
 - Reagan was pro-choice as Calif Governor
 - Initially Nixon supported Equal Rights Amendment

Bill Clinton

Wins back Reagan Dems in part by
Neutralizing GOP advantages on crime and
welfare

- favoring death penalty and
- opposing “welfare as we know it”



American religious exceptionalism

US much higher % of people believe in God and attend worship regularly than in most advanced nations

- in US, 86% believe in heaven and 43% attend religious services weekly,
- corresp numbers in Britain are 54% and 14%).

In US unlike W Europe, rate of religious beliefs are **higher than in 19th century.**

Conservative Evangelical Protestants (Literal Interpr of Bible)

grown in number, and polit activity strongly

- anti-abortion
- Anti gay
- For abstinence only sex education
- Favor tradition gender roles
- Anti teaching evolution
- Disproportionately Southern
- Allied with Repub Party since 1980

The new religious divide in US

- In the past, primarily by religious affiliation (Protestant, vs Catholic & Jew).
- There are still some such differences
 - but much less than in past

Religious Affiliation & Pres Vote 2016

Religious Affiliation	% Dem (NY Times poll)
Protestant	39%
Catholic	45%
Jewish	71%
None	68%
Other	62%

The current religious divide

- Religiously conservative Protestants, Catholics and Jews vote Repub
- Religiously liberal and secular Protestants, Catholics and Jews vote Dem

Religious Involvement and 2016 Pres Vote

Attend Religious Services	% Dem
Weekly	40%
Sometimes	47%
Never	62%

Religious Conservatism

	% Dem
White Born Again or Evangelical	16
Others	59

Race/ Ethnicity and Voting in recent elections

- *Whites*: mostly Repub, Less than 43% D in all recent elections
- *Blacks*: usually 90% Dem, although many are very religious and cultural conservative
- *Latinos*: Mostly Dem, despite cultural conservatism, but divided by income and country of origin
- *Asians*: similar to Latinos

Race and 2016 Pres Election

Racial Ethnic Group	% of Voters	% Dem of 2 party vote
White	70	39
Black	12	94
Latino	11	70
Asian	4	70
Other	3	61

Gender & Voting

- Prior to 1980: gender had virtually no effect on voting behavior.
- In 1980 Pres Election, women were 8% more Dem than men.
- This gender gap was between 4% and 8% in 1984-2012 Pres Elections

Gender contin

- Abortion *not* the main reason: M and F divided similarly on that issue.
- **Biggest** reasons: parties disagreed on
 - equal pay
 - family leave,
 - sexual assault
- M-F voting difference much bigger among single people than married

- In 2016 Pres Vote, Women were 13% more likely to vote Dem than Men
Women 54% D vs Men 41% D

Income and other Economic Factors Affecting Voting

- From 1932- 1964, income was one of the most important influences on vote.
- Now holding constant Race, Gender and Education,
 - There is very little relationship between Income and vote.
- But education has become a more important predictor

Environment Issue from 1970

- Environment not initially partisan:
 - Nixon signed Clean Air & Water Acts and act creating EPA
 - In 1990s, many in GOP accepted need to reduce CO₂ emissions,



Environmental Polarization

- But by 1980's GOP leadership was against environmental movement and
 - in 2000s, climate change denial became standard GOP policy.

Environmental Politics and Voting

- Many blue collar workers fear that environmental regulations will destroy their jobs
 - Many of them vote GOP
- Many educated affluent people value environment and have jobs that are not threatened by environmental regulations
 - Most vote Dem.

Effect of Education among Whites' Pres Vote- 2016

% Dem

NY Times Poll

With College Education	45%
Without college Education	29%

Trumps support vs Romney's

- Over 90% of those who voted for Trump had also voted for Romney in 2012
- But:
 - Romney did a little better among Whites *with* college education
 - Trump did a little better among Whites *without* college education

Why many low income Whites vote Repub

- Some have jobs threatened by Dem environ. regulation (coal & oil workers)
- Some don't understand the econ policies of the two parties:
 - Fox News and GOP candidates often mislead people (e.g taxes and pre-existing conditions).
 - Many fewer receive political education from labor union, because of great decline in union members. (From 35% in 1960s to 11 % now)

Why many low income Whites vote Repub

- Conservative religious and social values
 - Including belief that each person is responsible for success of self and family
- Seeing minorities and immigrants as taking what should go to people like them

Voting turnout

- Low income people are often low in education
- and often don't vote at all

Why many affluent people support Democrats

Liberal (Humane) Values

- Take care of the less fortunate
- Accept Differences
- “Do not oppress the stranger”

Protect Environment

How do Educated White People Vote?

- Occupations involving business profits (owning a business or being a highly paid employee of one) tend to vote Repub
 - Occupations in public service (teachers, social workers, nurses, journalists, gov't employees) tend to vote Dem
 - Actors and musicians tend to vote Dem
- Q. Which kinds of jobs tend to pay more?

Republicans and Racial Resentment

- Since 1964, GOP has been supported by Whites who resent Blacks and other people of color
 - Hence, Blacks are overwhelmingly Dem
- But until Trump, no GOP Pres candidate had explicitly appealed to racial resentment/ White Nationalism