

# Media Choice and the Role of Political Engagement

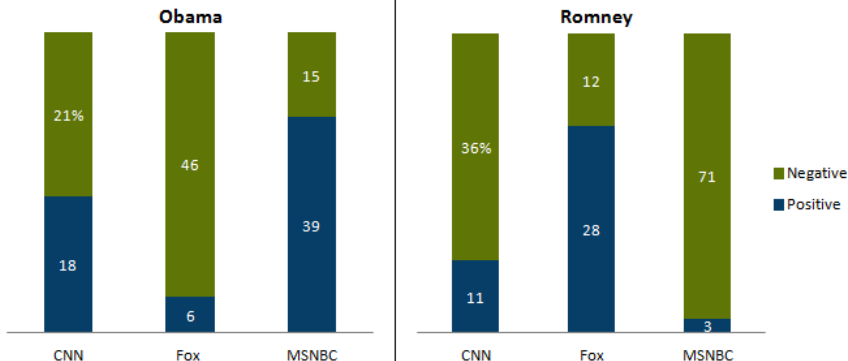
POLS 4790: Political Polarization

Week 10, Fall 2013

# Media Choice and Polarization

## Tone of Coverage on Cable News

*Percent of stories with tone*



**Note:** Mixed tone numbers are not included

**Date Range:** August 27 – October 21, 2012

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S PROJECT FOR EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM

# Some Considerations

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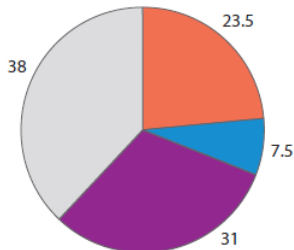
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- ▶ How does partisan media polarize (echo chamber, motivated reasoning)?

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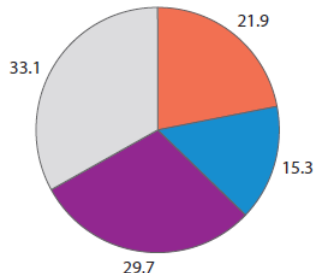
- ▶ How many citizens are active consumers of partisan media?
- ▶ How does partisan media polarize (echo chamber, motivated reasoning)?
- ▶ Might the new media environment generate polarization through routes other than the proliferation of partisan media?

# Media Choice and Polarization

KN: "regular" and "sometimes" viewers

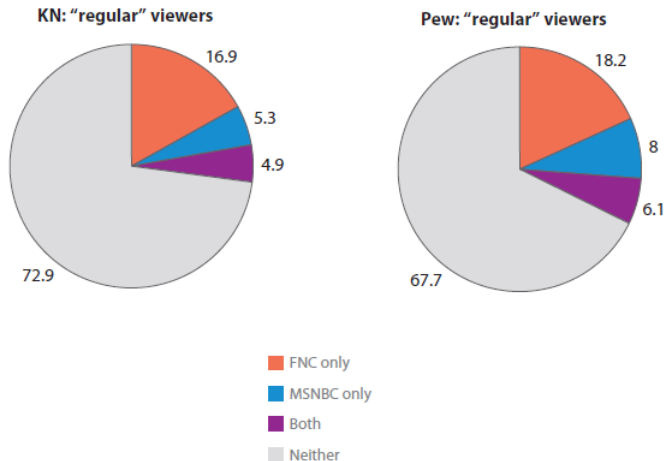


Pew: "regular" and "sometimes" viewers



Source: Markus Prior

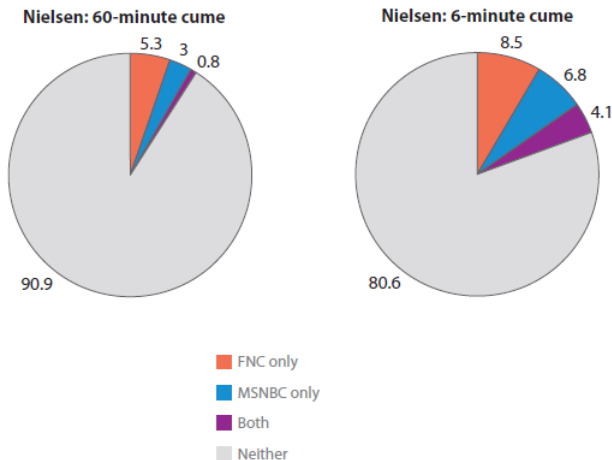
# Media Choice and Polarization



Source: Markus Prior



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# Media Choice and Polarization

Final broadcast primetime ratings for Wednesday, October 9, 2013:

Time	Net	Show	18-49 rating	18-49 Share	Viewers Live+SD (million)
8:00PM	CBS	<a href="#">Survivor</a> Blood vs Water	2.5	7	9.60
	FOX	<a href="#">The X Factor</a> (8-10PM)	2.2	6	7.25
	ABC	<a href="#">The Middle</a>	2.2	7	8.25
	NBC	<a href="#">Revolution</a>	1.5	5	5.45
	CW	<a href="#">Arrow</a> -P	0.9	3	2.74
tvbythenumbers.com					
8:30PM	ABC	Back in the Game	1.8	5	6.53
9:00PM	ABC	<a href="#">Modern Family</a>	3.9	11	10.64
	CBS	<a href="#">Criminal Minds</a>	2.6	7	10.98
	NBC	<a href="#">Law And Order: SVU</a>	1.6	4	6.31
	CW	<a href="#">The Tomorrow People</a> -P	0.9	2	2.32

# Media Choice and Polarization

## Selected Wednesday cable ratings: (all Live+Same Day ratings):

Show	Net	Time	Viewership (million, 18-49 rating Live+SD)	Adults rating (Live+SD)
DUCK DYNASTY	AEN	10:00 PM	7.403	3.2
<a href="#">American Horror Story</a>	FX	10:00 PM	5.538	3.0
MLB DIVISION SERIES	TBSC	8:00 PM	6.090	1.6
BAD INK	AEN	10:31 PM	3.002	1.4
DUCK DYNASTY	AEN	9:30 PM	3.634	1.4
<a href="#">South Park</a>	CMDY	10:00 PM	2.056	1.2
<a href="#">Family Guy</a>	ADSM	11:30 PM	2.176	1.1
DUCK DYNASTY	AEN	9:00 PM	3.016	1.1
<a href="#">Family Guy</a>	ADSM	11:00 PM	2.066	1.0
BAD INK	AEN	11:01 PM	1.980	0.9
<a href="#">American Horror Story</a>	FX	11:12 PM	1.743	0.9
<a href="#">KEY &amp; Peele</a>	CMDY	10:30 PM	1.505	0.9

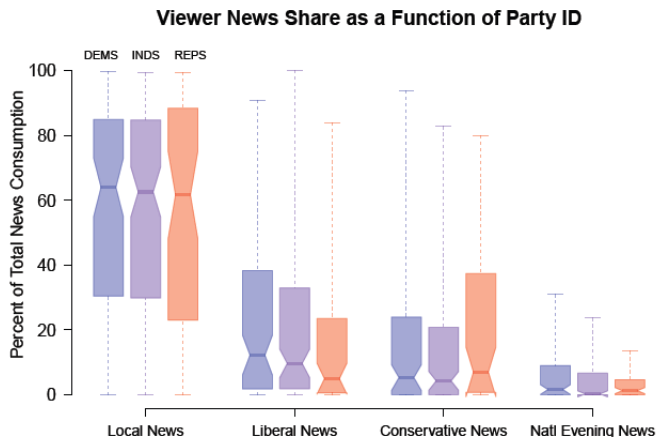
# Media Choice and Polarization

Net	8PM	P2+ (000s)	25-54 (000s)	35-64 (000s)
FOXN	THE OREILLY FACTOR	3205	488	1192
CNN	<a href="#">Anderson Cooper 360</a>	690	162	291
MSNB	ALL IN W/ CHRIS HAYES	965	217	413
CNBC	RISE OF THE MACHINES	105	43	65
HLN	<a href="#">Nancy Grace</a>	262	63	149
Net	9PM	P2+ (000s)	25-54 (000s)	35-64 (000s)
FOXN	KELLY FILE, THE	2475	384	911
CNN	PIERS MORGAN LIVE	542	117	235
MSNB	<a href="#">Rachel Maddow Show</a>	1145	299	503
CNBC	SECRET LIVES OF SUPR RICH	131	47	64
HLN	<a href="#">Dr. Drew</a> ON CALL	257	54	148

# Media Choice and Polarization

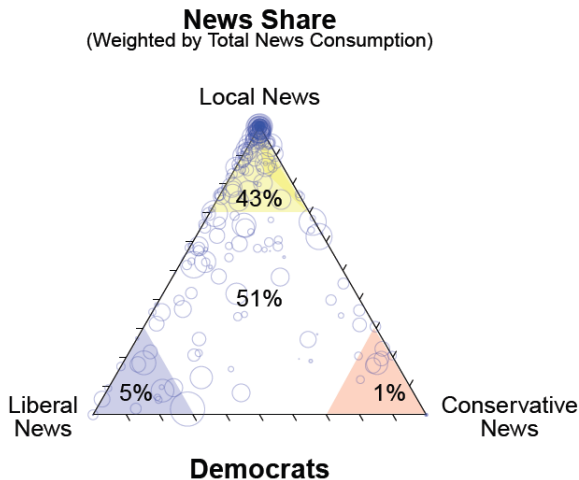
TOP 10 LIST FOR <span>Cable Network TV - United States</span> <span></span> <span></span>					Week of Sept. 30, 2013
RANK	PROGRAM	NETWORK	RATING	VIEWERS (000)	
1	NFL REGULAR SEASON L (MIAMI/NEW ORLEANS)	ESPN	8.6	13,717	
2	DUCK DYNASTY (SCOOT ALONG SI 47)	AEN	4.7	8,048	
3	THURSDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL (2013 WK 5 - BUF VS. CLE)	NFLN	4.2	6,866	
4	MLB WILDCARD (TAMPA BAY/CLEVELAND)	TBSC	3.1	4,743	
5	MLB WILDCARD (CINCINNATI/PITTSBURGH)	TBSC	3.0	4,599	
6	SONS OF ANARCHY (WOLFSANGEL)	FX	2.8	4,598	
7	MLB DIVISION SERIES (LA DODGERS/ATLANTA 2)	TBSC	2.7	4,136	
8	NASCAR SPRINT CUP L (KANSAS (OCT))	ESPN	2.6	4,162	
9	SPORTSCENTER: L	ESPN	2.5	3,690	
10	MLB DIVISION SERIES (DETROIT/OAKLAND 1)	TBSC	2.4	3,560	

# Media Choice and Polarization



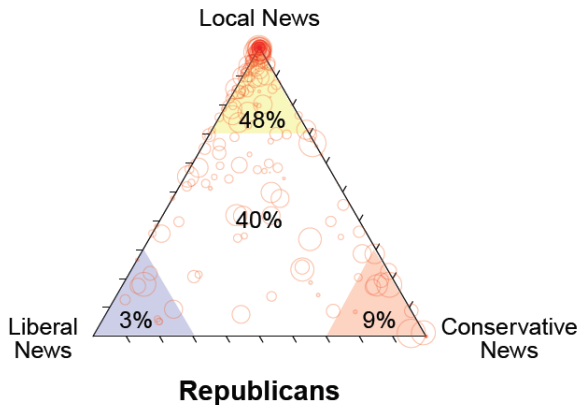
Source: Michael LaCour

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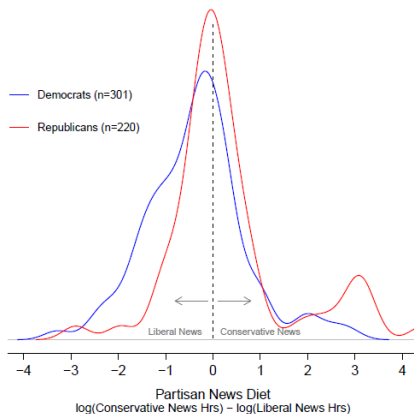


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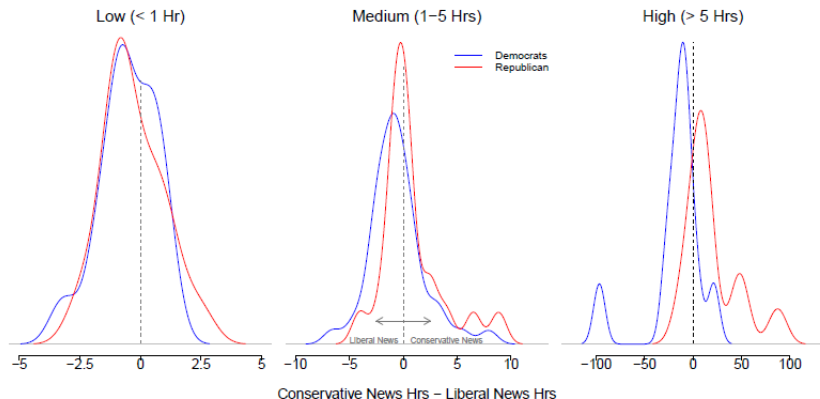
## News Diet Among Only Partisan News Sources



Source: Michael LaCour

# Media Choice and Polarization

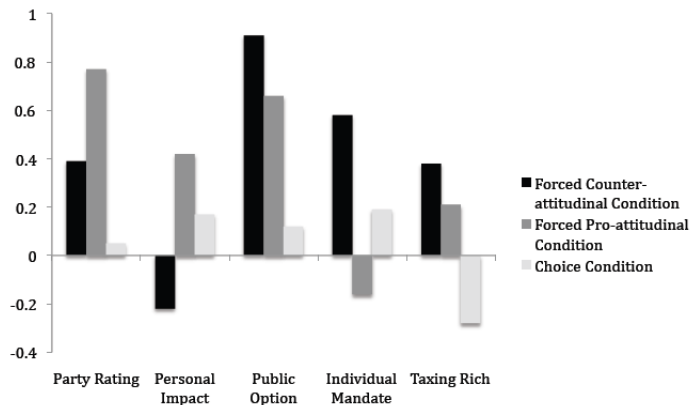
**Partisan News Diet by Exposure Level**  
(Hours of Partisan News Per Average Week)



Source: Michael LaCour

# Does Partisan Media Polarize its Viewers? Some Evidence that it Doesn't.

Figure 2. The Effect of Ideological News Shows on Issue Attitudes, Study 2



Source: Arceneaux and Johnson (2010)

# Does Partisan Media Polarize its Viewers? Some Evidence that it Does.

**TABLE 1** Effects of Partisan Media on Attitude Extremity, Experiment 1

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Like-Minded Treatment	0.14 (0.04)	0.13 (0.04)	0.14 (0.04)	0.13 (0.04)
Cross-Cutting Treatment	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.05 (0.04)	-0.05 (0.04)

Source: Levendusky (2013)

# Does Partisan Media Polarize its Viewers? Some Evidence that it Does.

TABLE 2 The Role of Viewer Preferences,  
Experiment 2

Variable	Estimate
Like-Minded Treatment	-0.05 (0.12)
Cross-Cutting Treatment	0.08 (0.12)
Prefer Like-Minded Media	-0.07 (0.14)
Prefer Cross-Cutting Media	-0.22 (0.18)
Like-Minded Treatment*Prefer Like-Minded Media	0.28 (0.19)
Like-Minded Treatment*Prefer Cross-Cutting Media	-0.17 (0.26)
Cross-Cutting Treatment*Prefer Like-Minded Media	-0.08 (0.20)

Source: Levendusky (2013)

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  - ▶ We also know that political knowledge increases perceived differences between candidates and parties; and hence promotes voter turnout, interest and engagement.

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  - ▶ Political knowledge questions.
  - ▶ Measures of cable and internet access (at the time, 33% had both).
  - ▶ A measure of news vs. entertainment preference.



# Ranking of TV Programs

Science Fiction shows like *X-Files* or *Star Trek Voyager*

Comedy/Sitcoms like *Friends* or *The Simpsons*

Drama shows like *ER* or *Law and Order*

Soap Operas like *General Hospital* or *One Life to Live*

Reality TV shows like *Survivor* or *Cops*

Sports

Game Shows like *Jeopardy* or *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*

News

Documentary programs on channels like *History Channel* or *Discovery Channel*

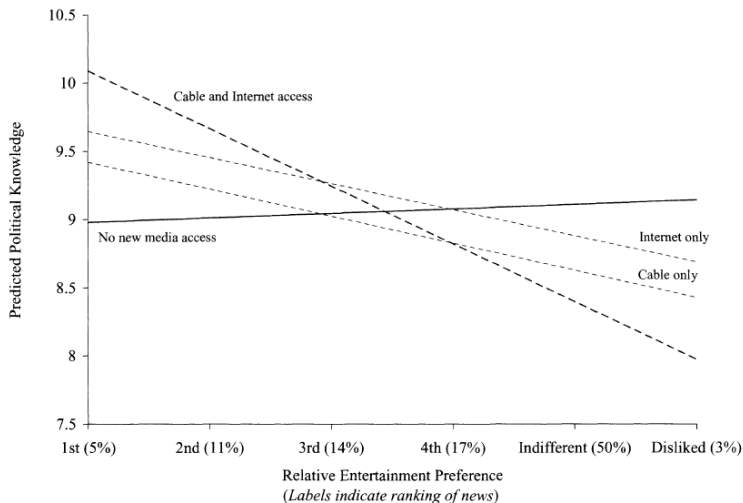
Music Videos

# Ranking of TV Programs

they dislike.<sup>4</sup> The measure of people's relative preferences for entertainment over news (to which I will refer as Relative Entertainment Preference or REP) is thus coded 5 if the respondent dislikes news, 4 if the respondent neither dislikes it nor selects it as one of her top four genres, and 3, 2, 1, and 0 if the respondent selects news as her fourth-, third-, second- or most-liked genre, respectively.<sup>5</sup> Exactly half of the respondents are indifferent to news, neither ranking it nor marking it as "disliked." Three percent dislike news explicitly and the remaining respondents rank it fourth (17%), third (14%), second (11%), or first (5%).

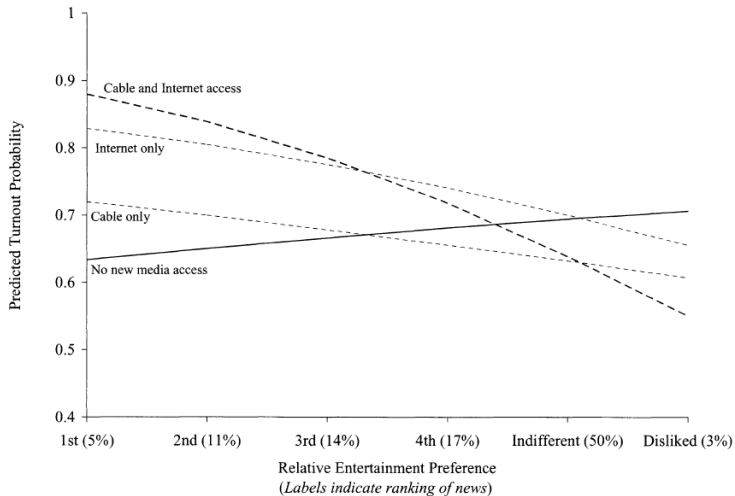
# Proliferation of Non-News Choices (Prior 2007)

**FIGURE 1 Political Knowledge and Relative Entertainment Preference**



# Proliferation of Non-News Choices (Prior 2007)

FIGURE 2 Turnout and Relative Entertainment Preference



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- ▶ Of course, this isn't to suggest that the rise (actually, return) of partisan media is inconsequential. The consumption of partisan/ideologically-congruent messages may have a polarizing effect on attitudes as well as interpretation of objective facts (which ties in with last week).

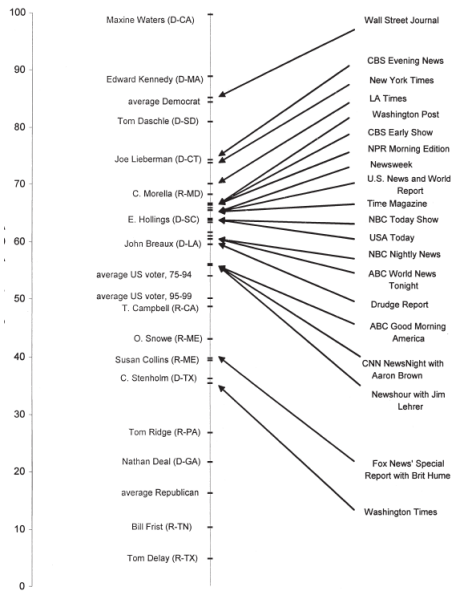
# Groseclose & Milyo (2005) Measure of Media Bias

TABLE I  
THE 50 MOST-CITED THINK TANKS AND POLICY GROUPS  
BY THE MEDIA IN OUR SAMPLE

Think tank/policy group	Average score of legislators who cite the group	Number of citations by legislators	Number of citations by media outlets
1 Brookings Institution	53.3	320	1392
2 American Civil Liberties Union	49.8	273	1073
3 NAACP	75.4	134	559
4 Center for Strategic and International Studies	46.3	79	432
5 Amnesty International	57.4	394	419
6 Council on Foreign Relations	60.2	45	403
7 Sierra Club	68.7	376	393
8 American Enterprise Institute	36.6	154	382
9 RAND Corporation	60.4	352	350
10 National Rifle Association	45.9	143	336
11 American Association of Retired Persons	66.0	411	333
12 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace	51.9	26	328
13 Heritage Foundation	20.0	369	288

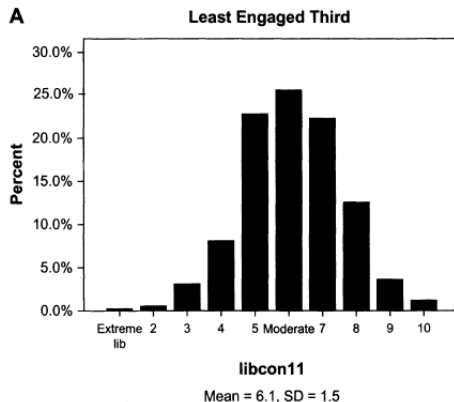


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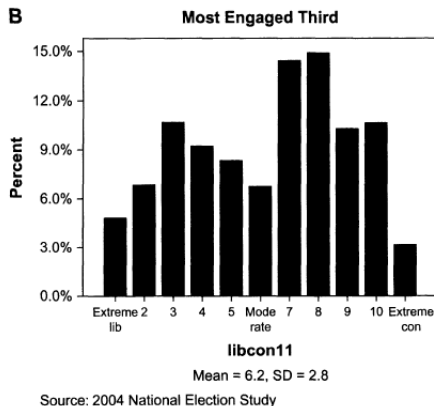
# Polarization and Political Engagement

**FIGURE 1 Ideological Polarization of U.S. Electorate in 2004 by Level of Political Engagement**



Source: Abramowitz and Saunders (2008)

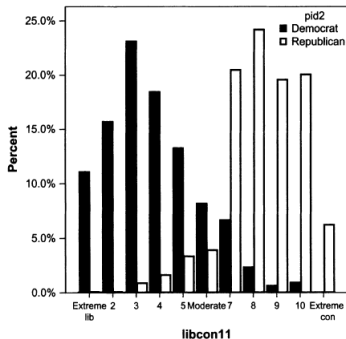
# Polarization and Political Engagement



Source: Abramowitz and Saunders (2008)

# Polarization and Political Engagement

**FIGURE 4 Liberal-Conservative Policy Preferences of Politically Engaged Democratic and Republican Identifiers**

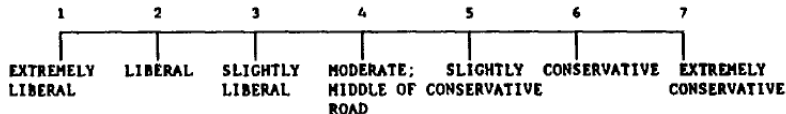


Source: 2004 National Election Study

Source: Abramowitz and Saunders (2008)

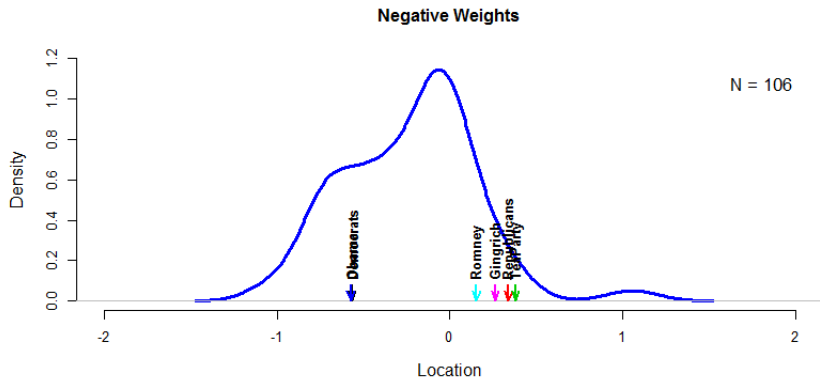
# Aldrich-McKelvey Scaling

- G5. (RB, P. 5) We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a 7-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative.



- G5a. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

# Aldrich-McKelvey Scaling



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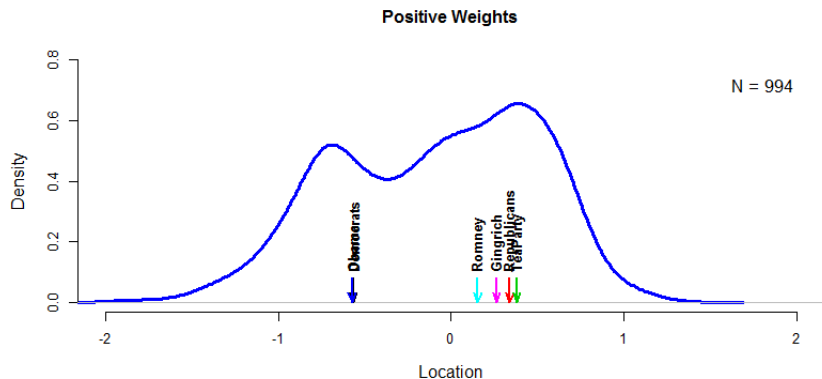
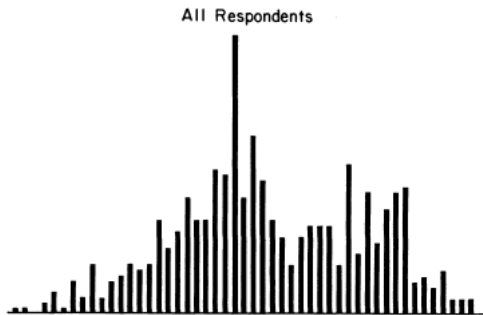


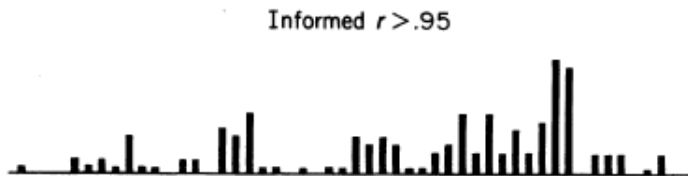
FIGURE 2  
1980 Liberal-Conservative A-M Scaled Locations



Source: Palfrey and Poole (1987)

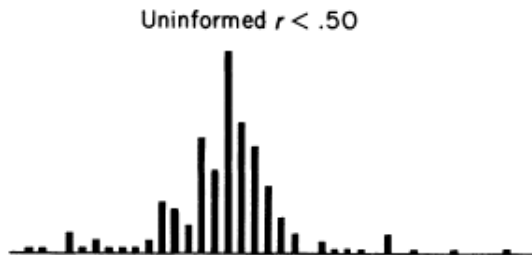


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# Why Aren't Moderates More Engaged?

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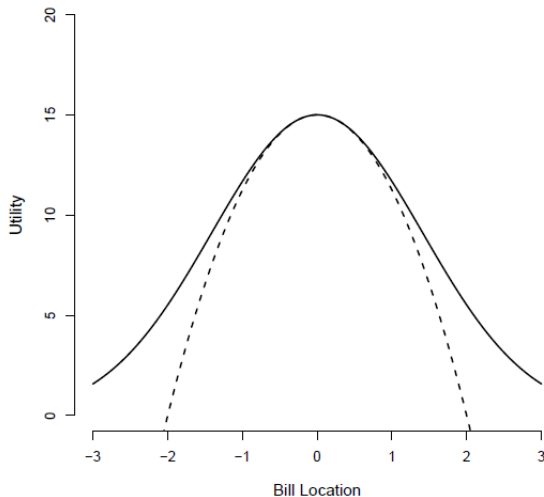
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- ▶ “Passionate moderate” is an oxymoron.
- ▶ Increasing shut out of the political process?
  - ▶ More formally, this is known as “alienation from indifference” (Riker and Ordeshook 1973).

# Alienation from Indifference



# Why Aren't Moderates More Engaged?



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- ▶ So, a positive feedback loop whereby moderates become less and less engaged in politics?