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THE CHANGING NATURE OF MASS BELIEF SYSTEMS:
THE RISE OF CONCEPT AND POLICY IDEOLOGUES

ABSTRACT: *The proportion of the American electorate that is “constrained” by ideology has risen dramatically since Philip E. Converse suggested, in the early 1960s, that ideology is the province of only a small fraction of the mass public. In part, the rise of ideological voters has been obscured by the tendency of scholars after Converse to equate them with those who use terms referring to ideological concepts, such as liberal and conservative, in open-ended interviews. These “concept ideologues,” however, are not the only members of the public whose political opinions show evidence of ideological constraint. There is also a growing segment of the public, the “policy ideologues,” who take positions on three or more policy issues but do not happen to mention ideological concepts. Policy ideologues prove to be as politically knowledgeable as concept ideologues; their attitudes are nearly as constrained across issues and over time; and their policy stances usually “make sense” as liberal or conservative—not surprisingly, as they are almost as willing as concept ideologues to label themselves ideologically, when asked. By 2012, the portion of the public consisting of concept and policy ideologues had reached 42 percent. It declined to 38 percent in 2016, but was still a far cry from the 12 percent of the electorate whom Converse identified as ideologues or near ideologues as of 1956.*

Keywords: *belief systems; concept ideologues; policy ideologues; levels of conceptualization; political sophistication; Philip E. Converse*

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The nature of mass belief systems has changed dramatically since 2000, which is the last time a survey of the U.S. mass public was coded by the “levels of conceptualization” devised by Philip E. Converse in one of the chapters he contributed to *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960). I will show that the percentage of the public that can be categorized as adhering to the “belief systems” Converse explored there, and in his seminal 1964 paper on “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics” (Converse [1964] 2006), has increased substantially since then. I will also introduce a new category, “policy ideologues,” to reflect a type of citizen to which Converse referred only in passing, but which is now quite common. Unlike most of the citizens whom Converse called “ideologues” or “near ideologues,” whom I relabel *concept* ideologues, policy ideologues do not mention overarching concepts such as liberalism, conservatism, or the scope of government in the open-ended interviews conducted by the American National Election Survey (ANES), on which Converse drew. Rather, policy ideologues take at least three public-policy stands when asked what they like and dislike about the major parties and presidential candidates. Although it was very rare for citizens in the 1950s to show evidence of holding a clear belief system—Converse analyzed ANES respondents during the presidential campaign of 1956—today’s highly intense and polarized policy debates seem to have made this much more common. A close examination of policy ideologues will show that they are just as politically knowledgeable and consistent on issue dimensions as those who employ ideological terms; that they usually identify themselves as liberals or conservatives, even though their interview transcripts fail to evince ideological terms; and that their policy views are consistent with this self-identification.

The “levels of conceptualization” were introduced in Chapter 10 of *The American Voter*, which was based on Converse’s reading of what 1956 ANES respondents said when asked what they liked and disliked about the Democrats, Republicans, Stevenson, and Eisenhower. In writing this chapter, “The Formation of Issue Concepts and Partisan Change”—upon which he elaborated in “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics”—Converse left an excellent roadmap for future replications by providing a set of examples of each of the levels and sub-levels that he created: “ideologues” (Level A in *The American Voter*; Level I in “The Nature of Belief Systems”); “near ideologues” (Level B; Level II); “group interest” voters (Level C; Level III); “nature-of-the-times” voters (Level D; Level IV); and voters whose comments contained “no

issue content” (Level E; Level V) (Campbell et al. 1960, Table 10.1; Converse [1964] 2006, Table 1). Each exemplification of a level consisted of a verbatim transcript of what a respondent said. Converse grouped various examples together to explain his coding decisions.

In the many years since the publication of *The American Voter* and “The Nature of Belief Systems,” scholars writing about “ideologues” in Converse’s sense have typically combined “ideologues” and “near ideologues.” The distinction is a fine one, with “ideologues” showing signs that they understand commonly accepted meanings of liberal and conservative belief systems, while near-ideologues merely make some reference to liberalism or conservatism or to one of the closely associated concepts (e.g., “I don’t like big government”). In reviewing the available data from 1956–1988 and 2000, I found that separate codings for ideologues and near ideologues existed for only one election, as coders typically combined the two categories.¹ My own preliminary review of the 2016 interviews led me to conclude that the two categories were difficult to differentiate, requiring too many judgment calls, which may explain why earlier coders combined them. Therefore, I decided to follow their practice. Thus, when I write about “concept ideologues” in this paper I am referring to respondents that Converse coded as either ideologues or near ideologues.

However, I will exclude one portion of Converse’s near ideologues from the category of “concept ideologues”: those whose open-ended remarks focused on a set of policy issues. The original 1956 coding scheme, as documented by John C. Pierce (1969), shows a sub-category of near ideologues labeled as having “Rich Specific Issue Content,” which was explained as having “differentiated structure without explicit ideological reference” (Pierce 1969, 60–62).² Although Converse’s coding of this sub-category has been lost, it is doubtful that it was a very large contingent in 1956. In recent years, however, such policy-oriented respondents have become quite numerous. As explained shortly, I label this group “policy ideologues.”

As we shall see, substantial increases in both concept and policy ideologues since the 1980s account for virtually all of the increase in the proportion of ANES respondents whose partisanship matches their ideology (conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats). Not only are both concept ideologues and policy ideologues more numerous than they used to be, but their higher degree of ideological constraint has produced a marked rise in the overall correspondence between partisanship and

ideology. On the other hand, the decline in ideologically inconsistent partisans (liberal Republicans and conservative Democrats) has occurred across the board. Thus, party polarization at the mass level appears to stem from changes among those constrained by belief systems, which increase ideological/partisan consistency; and from partisan sorting, which diminishes the number of partisans who are out of step with their party's ideological stance.

Reconceptualizing the Levels of Conceptualization

As I started to code 2016 respondents' comments by level of conceptualization, I found myself frequently writing "clear belief system; no ideological concepts" in the margin of the transcripts. In such cases, the respondent would discuss numerous specific policies, but without mentioning any overarching terms such as "liberalism" or "conservatism," or ideologically charged concepts such as the degree of federal involvement in the economy.

Initially I simply coded these respondents as "ideologues." Converse, after all, had indicated that in addition to expressing abstract thinking, a respondent qualified as an ideologue by showing indirect evidence of an overarching belief system that would link her evaluations of parties and/or candidates to the parties' or candidates' issue positions. As Converse said in *The American Voter*, some respondents "had highly differentiated images relevant to one or another ideological content domain, yet failed to introduce the generalized concepts that are normally used to summarize and order these perceptions in sophisticated debate" (Campbell et al. 1960, 233). He invoked a respondent who remarked that the Democrats were for higher Social Security/old age pensions and better conditions for workers, whereas the Republicans opted not to take action to end the Great Depression.

Based on my own recollections from reading the microfilmed 1956 interviews many years ago, I believe that the policy-oriented pattern exemplified by this respondent was relatively rare in the era when Converse developed the levels of conceptualization.³ However, it quickly became apparent that this pattern was very common in more recent ANES interviews. After writing "clear belief system; no ideological concepts" in the margins of about 10 percent of the first 300 transcripts I coded, I created a sub-category to keep track of this pattern. I also realized that I needed to develop a clear standard for slotting people into this sub-

category. In my judgment, someone who mentioned one or two policy issues typically seemed to be oriented around how his or her favored group would be helped or hurt by the policies. In contrast, once someone mentioned three distinct policy issues, they were usually putting together the building blocks of a platform for governing. For example, someone who said she liked Trump because he would increase military spending and reduce immigration and disliked Clinton because she would increase taxes expressed a clear grasp of some of the most fundamental policy positions debated in the 2016 campaign.

A set of examples from the 2016, 2012, and 2008 ANES surveys will provide a brief overview of the sorts of responses that were made by people whom I coded as policy ideologues. The first example (R1748) is a woman in her 30s, interviewed in 2016, who had a college degree and worked as a registered nurse:

Is there anything in particular that you like about the Republican Party? I do like some of their policies about military spending, handling the Middle East, um, and handling China, trades [sic] with other countries.

Is there anything in particular that you don't like about the Republican Party? I don't like that they're against gay marriage; against abortion; their views on health care.

Is there anything in particular that you like about the Democratic Party? I agree with a lot of their policies, healthcare for everyone, let's see what else. I like their views on gay marriage, abortion, and the tax on the wealthy.

Is there anything in particular that you don't like about the Democratic Party? I don't particularly like the issue on military spending and I don't particularly like, let's see, some of the issues with you know the Middle East. How we're handling refugees coming in. Um . . . trading with China.

Is there anything in particular about Donald Trump that might make you want to vote for him? There's some of his policies that I'm ok with—maybe 1 or 2 policies.

Is there anything in particular about Donald Trump that might make you want to vote against him? Lack of experience; I don't agree with a lot of his policies; he's just too hot headed; I don't trust him; I think he's been running a negative campaign.

Is there anything in particular about Hillary Clinton that might make you want to vote for her? Gender; experience; her policies.

Is there anything in particular about Hillary Clinton that might make you want to vote against her? Her email incident, the trusting issue; I'm not 100 percent for all her policies.

This respondent was clearly very focused on multiple questions of public policy, but also conflicted, with some of her views favoring the Democrats and others favoring the Republicans. Reflecting her mixture of liberal and conservative views, she placed herself as a “moderate” (4) on the 7-point ideology scale in both her pre- and post-election interviews, and right in the middle (5) of the 0-10 left/right scale, equidistant from her placement of each party on the same scale. However, even though this woman did not use any ideological terms, and even though her policy views did not seem to be dictated by either liberalism or conservatism, *something* determined her policy stances. Furthermore, her stances on the issues were not in any way contradictory, as Converse said was often the case with respondents at lower levels of conceptualization, who typically had inconsistent (and unstable) attitudes. Hence this respondent is a good example of someone who seems to have what Converse ([1964] 2006, 44) called an “idiosyncratic” (neither liberal nor conservative) belief system. She apparently knew what both liberals and conservatives stood for and quite rightly realized that she was not solidly in line with either one. Calling herself a “moderate” makes perfect sense and sums up her apparent belief system.

The second example (R1989) comes from a man in his 40s, interviewed in 2012, who had a college degree and worked as an administrator in a nursing home:

Is there anything in particular that you like about the Republican Party? A few key points—I like their views on defense of the US, their economic policies, creating jobs, and building the economy.

Is there anything in particular that you don't like about the Republican Party? Their views on abortion. This goes for both the parties—the uncooperativeness with working with the other party.

Is there anything in particular that you like about the Democratic Party? No.

Is there anything in particular that you don't like about the Democratic Party? Their tax policies, health care reform, and stimulus spending. Wanting to increase taxes on the rich; I don't agree; I believe the rich already pay their own share.

Is there anything in particular about Mitt Romney that might make you want to vote for him? Economic policy. His plan to create jobs and get rid of Obamacare.

Is there anything in particular about Mitt Romney that might make you want to vote against him? There are things I don't like but not so bad to vote against him. I don't agree with his belief on right to life.

Is there anything in particular about Barack Obama that might make you want to vote for him? No.

Is there anything in particular about Barack Obama that might make you want to vote against him? Obamacare, foreign policy, economic policy, amount of debt the government has incurred. I don't like his statement he made to the Russian president how he would be able to help him after the election is over. The protection of U.S. citizens overseas; also, allowing countries to develop nuclear weapons in the Middle East. Not showing enough support for Israel. Reducing the United States nuclear arsenal while other countries have not.

As to be expected from the negative evaluations expressed here about the policies of the Obama administration and the Democratic Party, this respondent said he was a conservative in both the pre- and post-election interviews. On the 0-10 left-right scale, he placed himself at 8 while placing the Republicans at 9 and the Democrats at 1. The one-point difference between his views and his perception of the Republicans perhaps reflects his difference with the GOP on abortion. Yet while this respondent clearly was a conservative, he made no mention of ideological concepts in the open-ended responses.

Our third example (R432) is from a 2008 interview with a man in his 50s who had some college education and reported being permanently disabled:

Is there anything in particular that you like about the Republican Party? There seems to be an infusion [sic] of whenever we elect a Republican president of perhaps—things are going to get good, unrealistic feeling, we are always disappointed.

Is there anything in particular that you don't like about the Republican Party? They seem to always put us in a hole, economically, our relationship with other countries, with the world in general, we seem to come out looking forward/look how the nations, either the Islamic or Muslim world look at us now for our involvement in the Middle East, look at our lack of interest in the genocide in Africa, Rwanda—we didn't do a damn thing.

Is there anything in particular that you like about the Democratic Party? They're more realistic at where we stand in relationship to the world community, all the problems in there, they take a more realistic approach to things, they have a more humanistic approach and feeling for the world problems—health, economic/usually the subcommittees, congressional and Senate try to subsidize certain programs so they might continue so the US can be looked on as a benevolent nation—the peace corps, international food program.

Is there anything in particular that you don't like about the Democratic Party? They always let us down. They can't seem to finish what they start. They back down on vital important issues where they will concede—various committees—you get like a case of glass half full—it's actually half empty—I've been disappointed with their performance.

Is there anything in particular about John McCain that might make you want to vote for him? No.

Is there anything in particular about John McCain that might make you want to vote against him? His age, his voting record, his ideology on foreign policy, as far he seems to be in the main Republican change of thought camp so far as dealing with oil policies, intrusive actions, involving other countries, he's really so similar to Bush. And look at the mess we are in now—it hasn't worked and it isn't working. It's like where his priorities are where money should go, like education vs. oil interests, stuff like that, priorities are screwed.

Is there anything in particular about Barack Obama that might make you want to vote for him? I'm just hoping his age and his outlook on policy—he's not, he seems fresher, fresher ideas, maybe a different approach on a lot of our policy. Financially, I hate to say it, but when you really read the platform, unfortunately it's still the party platform—there really is nothing new—income tax incentives, it's been done, you could almost say I would have voted for Clinton, but since she's not in the race I'm picking the lesser of two evils.

Is there anything in particular about Barack Obama that might make you want to vote against him? No.

Although this respondent mentions the term “ideology,” he discusses not broad ideological concepts but a wide range of policies and programs. The level of detail in his policy comments is impressive, including mentions of congressional committees and the Democratic Party platform. And his closed-ended responses explain his rather liberal outlook on

specific policies. In the pre-election interview he placed himself at the slightly liberal 3 notch on the 7-point ideology scale, and in the post-election interview he moved himself to the liberal notch of 2. On the 0-10 left-right scale, he placed himself at 2, while placing the Democrats 2 points to the right, at 4, and the Republicans at the most right-wing point, 10.

These three examples illustrate how respondents who use policy positions as the basis of party and candidate evaluations may possess a belief system akin to, and sometimes identical with, the belief systems that Converse looked for.

The Rise of Policy Ideologies

Previous attempts to replicate Converse's measures of the levels of conceptualization do not address respondents who discuss multiple policy issues but fail to mention ideological terms or concepts (Knight, 1985; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008). Nevertheless, such respondents are discernible once one carefully examines the master coding of answers to the open-ended ANES questions asked from 1972 to 2000.

For example, in the 1988 and 2000 ANES surveys, I found 192 cases where the respondent had offered at least six policy responses and yet were coded as either "group benefits" or "nature of the times." This amounted to about 5 percent of the entire sample in each year. This discovery led me to use the ANES Time Series Cumulative Data File to produce a count of the number of specific policy comments made by each respondent from 1972 to 2000.⁴ I found 1,214 cases coded as "group benefits" or "nature of the times" in which a respondent had made at least three policy comments. (There were no cases in which respondents who made three policy comments were classified as "no issue content"). I reviewed the coding of each of these cases individually to see if the respondents had referred to at least three distinct questions of public policy, as some respondents just mentioned the same one or two issues repeatedly. This method is less reliable than reading a transcript of what respondents actually said, as I did with the 2008-2016 surveys.⁵ Some cases were clear as day, but others involved codes that were so similar that it was hard to judge whether the respondent was just talking about a single issue in somewhat different terms. In 48 percent of the 1,214 cases, I judged that the respondent probably should have been coded as a policy ideologue by virtue of mentioning three distinct

policies. In addition, I changed a small number of cases from “nature of the times” to “group benefits” because the respondent mentioned a policy or two that I coded as belonging in the latter category in my work with the 2008–16 data.

Two examples will serve to illustrate my recoding process. The first (R642) is from a 2000 interview with a man in his 40s who was a high-school graduate and worked as a truck driver. (Keep in mind that these are the codes assigned to the respondents’ comments, not transcriptions of the actual comments.)

Likes about Republicans: Against government activity; economy better under them; less concerned with environmental protection; against aid to parochial schools; for strong military.

Dislikes about Republicans: Party is poorly organized/ineffective.

Likes about Democrats: No.

Dislikes about Democrats: General assessment of ideas.

Likes about Bush: For lower taxes; against government activity; for strong military; for aid to parochial schools; would meddle less in world problems.

Dislikes about Bush: No.

Likes about Gore: No.

Dislikes about Gore: Against lower taxes; overly concerned about environmental protections; too much for government activity.

This respondent was coded as a group-benefits voter, presumably because of the coder’s interpretation of the reasons he offered for some of the issue positions that he took. What is relevant here, however, is that he took positions on a great many policy issues; and that, as might be expected from his consistently conservative policy views, he placed himself as an “extreme conservative” on the 7-point ideology scale. Thus, he appears to have been misclassified as a group-benefits voter. Converse would have coded such a respondent as a near-ideologue in 1956.⁶

The second example comes from 1984, the year in which policy ideologues first seem to have become a significant group. R1060 was a woman

in her 50s who had dropped out of high school and was now a retired administrative assistant.

Likes about Republicans: General positive assessment of their economic policy.

Dislikes about Republicans: Their policy on law and order; they provide too much foreign aid; they are against senior citizens; they oppose reform of tax loopholes; they oppose the nuclear freeze.

Likes about Democrats: They are for the common man; they take a hard line on criminals; they are the party of JFK; they are good for the country; they are pro-education.

Dislikes about Democrats: They are too divided amongst themselves.

Likes about Reagan: No.

Dislikes about Reagan: Don't like his wife; he's against the nuclear freeze; he's against reform of tax loopholes; he's against welfare programs; he's against abortion.

Likes about Mondale: He's the lesser of two evils.

Dislikes about Mondale: He is uninspiring; don't like his running mate.

This respondent opposed many of the policies of the Reagan administration, and she placed herself at the most liberal point on the 7-point ideology scale. Yet she was classified as a group-benefits voter, probably because of her view that Republicans were against senior citizens. A more logical categorization would count her as a policy ideologue. This recategorization would be justified by her ideological self-placement, which we can be fairly certain was not based on a misunderstanding of the meaning of "liberal." The findings of widespread public ignorance of ideology in *The American Voter* and "The Nature of Belief Systems" would lead us to suspect that such misunderstandings may be commonplace, but that is unlikely in this case given the particular policies the respondent supported and opposed.

As can be seen in [Tables 1](#) and [2](#), the Reagan administration coincided with a substantial increase in the percentage of policy ideologues. [Table 1](#) shows that there were almost none of them in 1980, but that their level

Table 1. Levels of conceptualization among all ANES respondents

	1980	1984	1988	2000	2008	2012	2016
concept ideologues	21	19	18	19	25	29	29
policy ideologues	2	6	9	9	11	13	9
<i>concept ideologues plus policy ideologues</i>	23	25	27	28	36	42	38
group benefits	29	24	31	29	29	31	30
nature of the times	30	32	21	22	16	16	16
no issue content	18	20	21	21	19	12	16

Sources: 1980-88: Pierce/Hagner/Knight archived datasets (ICPSR 8151) as recoded by the author for policy ideologues. 2000: coding of open-ended responses, obtained from William Jacoby, as recoded by the author for policy ideologues. 2008-2016: author's coding of ANES open-ended responses.

reached 9 percent by the end of the Reagan years and that it has gotten higher since then.

The archived data from the 1970s do not include codes from the portion of the ANES sample that did not agree to a post-election interview.⁷ Hence, in order to make the data comparable from 1972 to 2016, some subsample of the full ANES sample must be selected. Because any respondent who reported voting would have been included in the post-election study, I decided to restrict the analysis in Table 2 to voters only. A sub-sample of respondents who voted seemed particularly appropriate because Converse included an analysis of just voters in both *The American Voter* and “Belief Systems.”

Policy ideologues among voters averaged about 2 percent for the three elections from 1972 to 1980. Again, one can see that the Reagan Administration appears to have led to a substantial increase in policy ideologues. Since the Reagan era, the percentage of policy ideologues among voters has averaged 12 percent—roughly six times the level found in the 1972-1980 electorates.

Why did this change begin to occur during the Reagan administration? The most likely answer is that Reagan's was the first presidency since ANES polling began in 1948 in which a major change in policy direction was advanced. The coders recorded many expressions of support for and opposition to Reagan's attempts to cut taxes, increase military spending, and reduce welfare spending. Reagan was also outspokenly conservative

Table 2. Levels of conceptualization among ANES respondents who voted

	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988	2000	2008	2012	2016
concept ideologues	25	27	27	25	23	24	31	35	33
policy ideologues	3	1	2	7	11	12	14	13	11
<i>concept ideologues plus policy ideologues</i>	28	28	29	32	34	36	45	48	44
group benefits	27	26	31	25	33	30	28	30	30
nature of the times	31	27	28	29	21	22	16	15	14
no issue content	15	19	12	14	11	13	11	7	12

Sources: 1980–88: Pierce/Hagner/Knight archived datasets (ICSPR 8151) as recoded by the author for policy ideologues. 2000: coding of open-ended responses, obtained from William Jacoby, as recoded by the author for policy ideologues. 2008–2016: author’s coding of ANES open-ended responses.

on a range of relatively new social issues, such as abortion, gun control, and environmental protection. These policy matters were frequently on the minds of policy ideologues in the Reagan era, and have become even more prominent in the elections since then.

Why weren't policy ideologues coded as ideologues in previous replications of Converse's levels of conceptualization? One can only speculate about coding decisions made long ago, but as we have already seen, a specific focus on ideological *concepts* may have been at work. Kathleen Knight did the coding throughout the 1980s, and her primary area of research interest was the role of ideological concepts in politics (Knight 1984 and 1985). The coding of the 2000 survey was done by two graduate students under the guidance of William Jacoby, whose major field of inquiry was also political ideology (Jacoby 1991 and 1995). It seems, accordingly, that only respondents who mentioned ideological terms or concepts were categorized as either "ideologues" or "near ideologues" by Jacoby or as "ideologues" by Knight. Both of these investigators coded my policy ideologues as group-benefits voters if they made any mention of a group, or nature-of-the-times voters if no group was mentioned.

Methodologically, what appears to have occurred was a failure by the coders to attend to the respondents' remarks holistically. Taken together, the policy ideologues' expressions of many ideologically consistent policy stances suggest that they were just the sort of voters who were scarce in the 1956 sample: ideologues "constrained" by an overarching belief system, reflecting a coherent set of policy stances.

Political Sophistication and Constraint

Converse's goal in constructing the levels of conceptualization was to explore the political "sophistication" of the electorate, with the highest levels of sophistication equated with having a relatively large quantity of political knowledge. Converse ([1964] 2006, 6-7) thought that this was possible because political knowledge may be organized by a coherent belief system, i.e., an ideology such as conservatism or liberalism. Lesser levels of sophistication and knowledge, therefore, would correspond to simpler and less-comprehensive organizing principles, such as "the expected favorable or unfavorable treatment of different social groupings in the population" by a party or candidate (group-benefits) (ibid., 14). The "nature-of-the-times" label (ibid., Table 1) was described by

Converse as being, “to some degree, a residual category, intended to include those respondents who invoked some policy considerations in their evaluations yet employed none of the references meriting location in any of the first three levels” (ibid., 16). Parties’ or candidates’ perceived responsibility for having caused nationwide problems, such as “bad [economic] times,” was one of the main decision criteria, but not the only one, enunciated by respondents in this category.

The main conclusion that Converse drew from the small numbers of ideologues and near ideologues was that political analysts, such as journalists and political scientists—who tend to qualify as ideologues themselves—should not assume that most voters achieve the level of sophistication that they (the journalists or political scientists) achieve, or imagine that they achieve, when they use ideological belief systems to understand, and to formulate opinions about, political candidates and parties. The fact that, as of 1956, a mere 12 percent of the electorate qualified as ideologues or near ideologues (ibid., Table 1) suggested to Converse that a “continental shelf” separated political elites and the masses, to whom the elites incorrectly attributed their own type of political sophistication and the correlative belief systems and knowledge levels (ibid., 66).

In effect, I am arguing that the rise of policy ideologues in recent years has narrowed this divide between masses and elites. My holistic impression of the remarks of the 374 respondents whom I classified as policy ideologues in the 2008, 2012, and 2016 surveys is that they demonstrated a good grasp of some of the major policy issues addressed in the campaign. Quantitatively, they discussed more issues than did concept ideologues: in 2016 the average policy ideologue offered 6.2 issue comments, as compared to 3.0 for concept ideologues, 1.5 for group-benefits voters, 1.4 for nature-of-the-times voters, and 0.0 for no-issue-content respondents. In addition to being rather talkative about the issues of the day, policy ideologues were fairly knowledgeable about and interested in presidential campaigns, and as we shall see, their policy stances were constrained across issues and across time, just as we would expect of highly sophisticated voters.

Tables 3a and 3b begin to show these patterns by examining respondents’ knowledge levels. For each of the periods in which I personally coded or recoded responses, I constructed a measure of political knowledge based on the percentage of correct answers to factual questions about politics (e.g., which party has a majority in the House, the names of current political leaders, the approximate unemployment rate). The consistent finding in Table 3a is that policy ideologues were only slightly

Table 3a. Mean pct. correct on political knowledge questions

	2008-16	2000	1980s
concept ideologues	62	63	65
policy ideologues	56	60	60
group benefits	41	44	43
nature of the times	35	43	39
no issue content	27	28	24

Table 3b. Interest in the presidential campaign

	2008-16	2000	1980s
concept ideologues	76	66	69
policy ideologues	72	67	67
group benefits	64	53	55
nature of the times	62	52	48
no issue content	40	28	31
very interested = 100, somewhat interested = 50, not much = 0			

Sources: 1980-88: Pierce/Hagner/Knight archived datasets (ICPSR 8151) as recoded by the author for policy ideologues and merged with ANES datasets. 2000: coding of open-ended responses, obtained from William Jacoby, as recoded by the author for policy ideologues and merged with ANES dataset. 2008-2016: author's coding of ANES open-ended responses and merged with ANES datasets.

less knowledgeable about such facts than concept ideologues,⁸ while group-benefits and nature-of-the-times respondents had a substantially weaker grasp of basic political facts; no-issue-content respondents had the least political knowledge. If we follow Converse in assuming that a belief system may be necessary to organize a large amount of political information, this finding, even exclusive of the respondents' ideological self-placement, suggests that policy ideologues do indeed have belief systems. Similar patterns were found with regard to interest in the presidential campaign, as shown in Table 3b. On a 0-100 scale, concept ideologues averaged the highest level of interest at 70, followed closely by policy ideologues at 69, with group-benefits voters at 57, nature-of-the-times voters at 54, and no-issue-content respondents at 33. This,

too, suggests the presence, among policy ideologues, of political belief systems that would make politics understandable, rather than remaining a blooming, buzzing confusion whose significance (for those who lack a belief system) is hard to grasp.

One of Converse's most celebrated findings was that the presence of a coherent belief system is correlated with the stability of political attitudes over time (Converse [1964] 2006, 44–52). He arrived at this conclusion in the course of attempting to determine whether the opinions of those of his respondents who were *not* concept ideologues were constrained by “idiosyncratic” belief systems that conferred on the world of politics as much meaning in these respondents' minds as liberalism and conservatism conferred on it in the minds of concept ideologues. He argued, however, that

if we are indeed involved here in idiosyncratic patterns of belief, each meaningful to the individual in his own way, then we could expect that individual responses to the same set of items at different points in time should show some fundamental stability. They do not. (Ibid., 44)

To demonstrate this, Converse showed that when respondents were asked the same “‘basic’ policy questions” at different points in time, “only about thirteen people out of twenty manage to locate themselves even on the same *side* of the controversy in successive interrogations, when ten out of twenty could have done so by chance alone” (ibid., 44, 45). The opinions of those who changed sides could not very well have been constrained by a belief system of any kind, whether standard or idiosyncratic.

The same strategy would probably be inappropriate in exploring whether policy ideologues' opinions manifest belief systems, as it is conceivable that they are simply determined advocates of policy positions that are unrelated by any ideology, whether standard or idiosyncratic. Thus, temporal attitude stability among their issue positions could not be assumed to demonstrate the presence of an overarching belief system. However, there is a variety of other temporal evidence suggesting that in most cases policy ideologues have, in fact, established a meaningful position on the liberal–conservative continuum in recent years, despite their failure to use such terminology in the interviews.

Both the pre- and post-election 2008–2016 ANES interviews asked respondents to place themselves on the 1–7 liberal–conservative scale, or to say that they “haven't thought about it.” The first panel in [Table 4](#)

Table 4. Temporal stability correlations and correlations between measures of ideology

4a. Stability correlation (r) of ideological identification in pre- and post-interviews

	concept ideologues	policy ideologues	group benefits	nature of times	no issue content
2008–2016 combined	.891	.840	.619	.458	.385

4b. Correlation (r) of ideological placement and liberal/conservative feeling thermometer placements

	concept ideologues	policy ideologues	group benefits	nature of times	no issue content
2008–16	.766	.733	.544	.447	.326
2000	.738	.703	.387	.464	.128
1980s	.751	.630	.401	.397	.171

4c. Correlation (r) of ideological placement and left/right placement

	concept ideologues	policy ideologues	group benefits	nature of times	no issue content
2008–16	.777	.665	.350	.185	.218

4d. Correlation (r) of liberal/conservative feeling thermometer placements and left/right placement

	concept ideologues	policy ideologues	group benefits	nature of times	no issue content
2008–16	.689	.661	.385	.321	-.064

Note: “Don’t know” and “Haven’t thought about it” responses are recoded to the midpoint in order to preserve the maximum number of cases.

Sources: 1980–88: Pierce/Hagner/Knight archived datasets (ICPSR 8151) as recoded by the author for policy ideologues and merged with ANES datasets. 2000: coding of open-ended responses, obtained from William Jacoby, as recoded by the author for policy ideologues and merged with ANES dataset. 2008–2016: author’s coding of ANES open-ended responses and merged with ANES datasets.

compares temporal stability coefficients among policy ideologues and those assigned to the other levels of conceptualization. The stability correlation for policy ideologues is nearly as high as it is for concept ideologues, while the other categories exhibit far less intertemporal stability in ideological placement. This suggests that respondents in the other categories are not as constrained by the ideologies with which they identify as are concept ideologues and policy ideologues.

In addition to the 7-point scale, ANES respondents are asked to rate “liberals” and “conservatives” on a 0–100 feeling thermometer. Subtracting a respondent’s rating of liberals from his or her rating of conservatives yields a scale ranging from –100 to 100. If respondents’ attitudes toward liberals and conservatives stem from their own ideologically motivated agreement or disagreement with liberals and conservatives, the correlation between their self-placement on the 7-point scale and their feeling-thermometer numbers should be highly correlated. As can be seen in the second panel in [Table 4](#), this is indeed the case for policy ideologues (as well as concept ideologues). These correlations show that policy ideologues were much more ideologically consistent than group-benefits or nature-of-the-times respondents. Thus, the policy ideologues I identified by reading the interviews from 2008–2016 seem to have staked out stable positions on the ideological continuum, as was the case with the policy ideologues that I identified by merely reviewing the coded responses from the 1980s and 2000.⁹

In recent ANES surveys, people have also been asked to place themselves on a 0–10 left–right scale. As the terms “left” and “right” are used less often in the United States than in other established democracies, even some of the most ideologically aware respondents might be unfamiliar with these terms. Thus, it is not surprising to see that the correlations between the left–right scale and the two liberal–conservative scales are generally lower than the other correlations in [Table 4](#). Yet the pattern of concept ideologues and policy ideologues showing far more ideological consistency than the other levels of conceptualization is again quite clear.

In addition to temporal constraint, Converse associated the intercorrelation of people’s political attitudes with the presence of a belief system. Respondents whose issue positions are constrained by belief systems should show more intercorrelative consistency than those in lower levels. In order to examine this possibility, I created three broad issue indices from the 2016 ANES survey, measuring stances on traditional partisan issues, stances on social issues, and stances on issues specific to Donald

Trump's presidential campaign. Traditional partisan issues consisted of support for, or opposition to, defense spending, increasing the minimum wage, taxing millionaires, aid for African-Americans, government intervention in health insurance, and government spending in areas such as health and education. The social issues were abortion, the death penalty, gun control, marijuana legalization, and same-sex marriage. The Trump issues were building a wall at the Mexican border, ending birthright citizenship, deporting unauthorized workers, opposing the admission of Syrian refugees, limiting foreign imports, opposing free-trade agreements, and torturing suspected terrorists.

As hypothesized, the correlations displayed in [Table 5](#) demonstrate that concept ideologues and policy ideologues possess the most constrained

Table 5. Constraint by levels of conceptualization, 2016

	concept ideologues	policy ideologues	group benefits	nature of times	no issue content
social issues and Trump issues (r)	.595	.734	.360	.231	.386
traditional issues and Trump issues (r)	.540	.676	.412	.343	.335
social issues and traditional issues (r)	.764	.712	.502	.390	.321
ideology and traditional issues (r)	.802	.692	.549	.464	.099
ideology and social issues (r)	.760	.742	.457	.461	.170
ideology and Trump issues	.583	.649	.389	.286	.069

Sources: Author's coding of open-ended responses in the 2016 ANES as merged with the in-person dataset.

political belief systems. On measures involving traditional partisan and social issues, there is a linear relationship between attitudinal constraint and the levels of conceptualization, with policy ideologues evidencing only slightly less consistency than concept ideologues. However, in all the cases where Trump issues are included, the correlations are actually highest for the policy ideologues. If political sophistication is, in part, a matter of being able to generate assessments of newly raised issues, then it would seem that policy ideologues are even more sophisticated than concept ideologues.

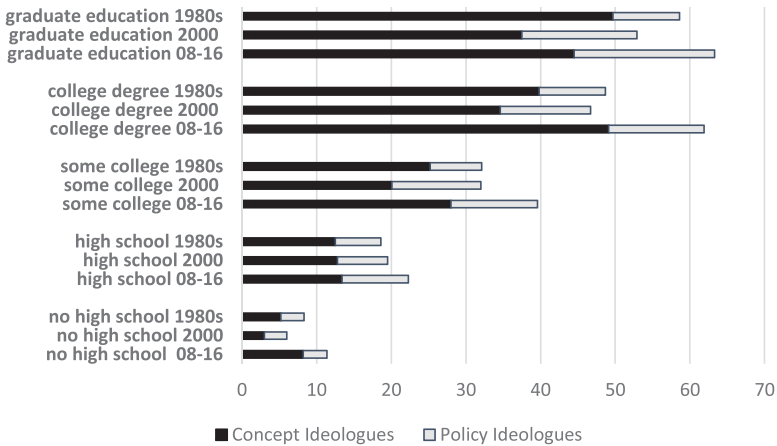
In sum, the evidence suggests that policy ideologues represent a politically engaged group that is comparable in knowledgeability and ideological constraint to concept ideologues. Thus, a larger proportion of the public apparently possessed an overarching political belief system during the 1980–2000 period than previously realized, and this segment of the electorate has grown substantially in recent presidential elections.

Policy Ideologues and Higher Education

These findings are hardly surprising in light of the rise in educational attainment since 1980. Beginning with Converse's classic analysis, it has been well established that those with exposure to higher education are more likely to evaluate politics ideologically (Converse [1964] 2006, 14–15, 25–26, 65). Thus, the increase in educational achievement levels during the period covered in this paper should account for at least some of the increase in concept ideologues since Reagan was elected president; and it stands to reason that the same would be true of the increase in policy ideologues. Between 1980 and 2016, the proportion of the ANES sample that had not graduated from high school declined from 27 percent to 9 percent while the percentage that had attained a college degree increased from 16 percent to 33 percent. As college-educated respondents were over seven times as likely to be concept ideologues or policy ideologues as were those without a high school degree in 1980, the changes in the educational distribution should have had the effect of increasing the numbers of concept ideologues and policy ideologues. A simple reweighting of the 1980 data with 2016 educational levels leads to the expectation that the percentage of concept ideologues and policy ideologues, combined, should have gone from 23 percent to 31 percent, accounting for a great deal of the actual increase in their ranks (see [Figure 6](#) below).

Figure 1 displays the relationship between education and the combined proportion of policy ideologues and concept ideologues. Within each educational level, there is evidence of an increase in concept ideologues and policy ideologues over time. There is also evidence of an increasing relationship between higher education and the higher levels of conceptualization. The percentage of ideologues and policy ideologues among those with merely a high-school education or less has always been quite small and has only budged upwards by a small amount over time. In contrast, the increase has been quite substantial among respondents with either some college or a college degree, with further increases among respondents with post-graduate education—perhaps limited somewhat by their already very high levels of sophistication. Thus, the relationship between education and higher levels of conceptualization has become stronger over the years, with the educationally advanced increasingly picking up on ideological and policy arguments.

Figure 1. Pct. concept ideologues and policy ideologues, by education level



Sources: 1980–88: Pierce/Hagner/Knight archived datasets (ICPSR 8151) as recoded by the author for policy ideologues and merged with ANES datasets. 2000: coding of open-ended responses, obtained from William Jacoby, as recoded by the author for policy ideologues and merged with ANES dataset. 2008–2016: author’s coding of ANES open-ended responses and merged with ANES datasets.

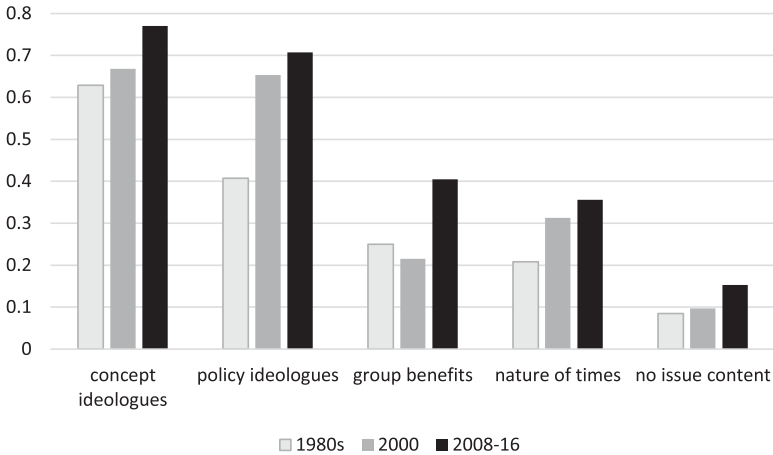
The Party-Ideology Nexus

Some of the political concepts that more highly educated people are likely to have been picking up in recent decades are the increasingly clear ideological and policy positions coming from party elites. The two major parties have become far more ideologically coherent at the elite level, as documented by numerous studies of congressional voting patterns and party platforms (e.g., Layman, Carsey, and Horowitz 2006; Theriault 2008). Other studies have confirmed that increasing numbers of voters are matching their partisan identity to their ideology with greater frequency, but not nearly at the same level as are political elites (Hetherington 2001 and 2009). If concept ideologues and policy ideologues tend to be relatively keyed in to political debates, the nexus between party and ideology should be especially strong among them.

Figure 2 demonstrates that the correlation between party identification and placement on the 7-point ideology scale is indeed much stronger for concept ideologues and policy ideologues than for those in Converse's other levels of conceptualization. In the 2008–2016 data, the shared variance for ideologues and policy ideologues is over 50 percent among these two groups of respondents, but it does not exceed 16 percent for any of the other groups. Voters at all levels of conceptualization show some evidence of an increase in the party-ideology connection, but this trend is especially pronounced among concept and policy ideologues.

The strengthening nexus between party and ideology seems to consist of two related but separate processes. Respondents increasingly choose an ideology that matches their party; they also become less likely to claim an ideological label that is sharply out of step with their party. These two processes are akin to what Alan Abramowitz (2010) calls “ideological matching” and Morris P. Fiorina (2017) terms “ideological sorting.” It is relatively difficult to match party and ideology correctly, but relatively easy to avoid an obviously incorrect pairing. Thus, the matching of Republicans to conservatism and Democrats to liberalism represents a relatively sophisticated level of thinking that might increasingly be found among those who think like concept and policy ideologues, while the decline of conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans may represent a set of choices that requires much less conceptualization, and thus should be found among all levels of conceptualization.

Figure 2. Correlation between party identification and ideological self-placement

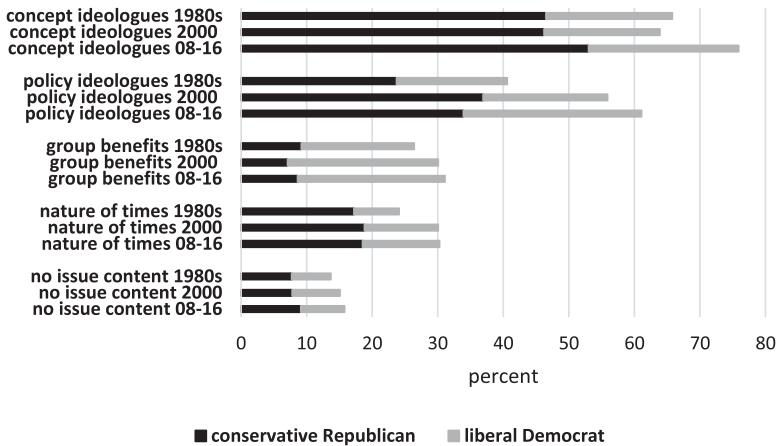


Sources: 1980–88: Pierce/Hagner/Knight archived datasets (ICPSR 8151) as recoded by the author for policy ideologues and merged with ANES datasets. 2000: coding of open-ended responses, obtained from William Jacoby, as recoded by the author for policy ideologues and merged with ANES dataset. 2008–2016: author’s coding of ANES open-ended responses and merged with ANES datasets.

As hypothesized, [Figure 3](#) demonstrates that concept and policy ideologues have always harbored the highest percentage of ideologically consistent partisans (conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats). This has been even more evident in recent years. All told, concept and policy ideologues accounted for 64 percent of conservative Republicans or liberal Democrats in 2008–2016 as compared to just 49 percent in 2000 and 47 percent in the 1980s. The vast majority of the rise in the matching of party and ideology has occurred because of the growth in the number of concept and policy ideologues, who seem better able to link their ideological position to their party identification.

The patterns for ideologically inconsistent partisans (liberal Republicans and conservative Democrats) are quite different, as shown in [Figure 4](#). Whereas consistency between party and ideology clearly increases as one moves up the levels of conceptualization, inconsistency is (at present) much more evenly distributed. Unlike the case with

Figure 3. Matches in partisan and ideological self-identification



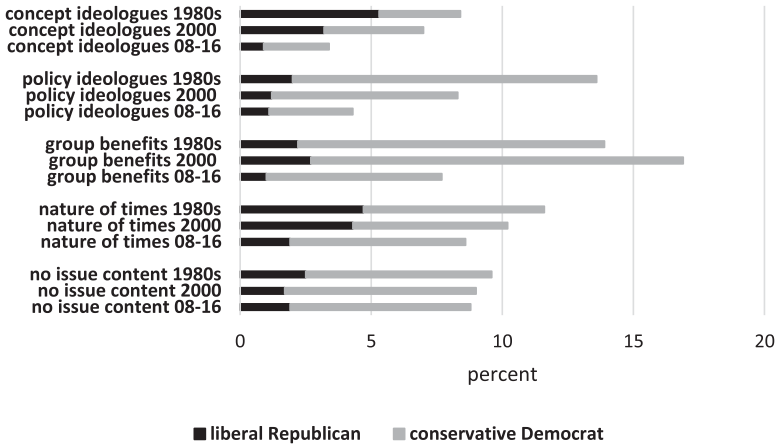
Sources: 1980–88: Pierce/Hagner/Knight archived datasets (ICPSR 8151) as recoded by the author for policy ideologues and merged with ANES datasets. 2000: coding of open-ended responses, obtained from William Jacoby, as recoded by the author for policy ideologues and merged with ANES dataset. 2008–2016: author’s coding of ANES open-ended responses and merged with ANES datasets.

ideologically consistent partisans, the percentage of concept and policy ideologues among those whose party conflicts with their ideology has not changed over time, ranging from 21 percent in the 1980s to 20 percent in 2000 and 22 percent in 2008–16. It is worth noting that the relatively large number of mismatches among policy ideologues in the 1980s occurred among conservative Democrats in the South who had not yet found a home in the Republican party—and who, it might be said, were not actually mismatched, given the conservatism of the Democratic Party in the South of that era.

The Shrinking Conceptualization Gap between the Parties

The data on the party–ideology nexus reflects a pattern that has been often noted in recent years: that Republicans are more likely to be ideologically and policy inclined than Democrats (Grossman and Hopkins 2016). Figure 5 demonstrates that Republican voters were much more likely than Democratic voters to be either concept or policy ideologues in

Figure 4. Mismatches in partisan and ideological self-identification

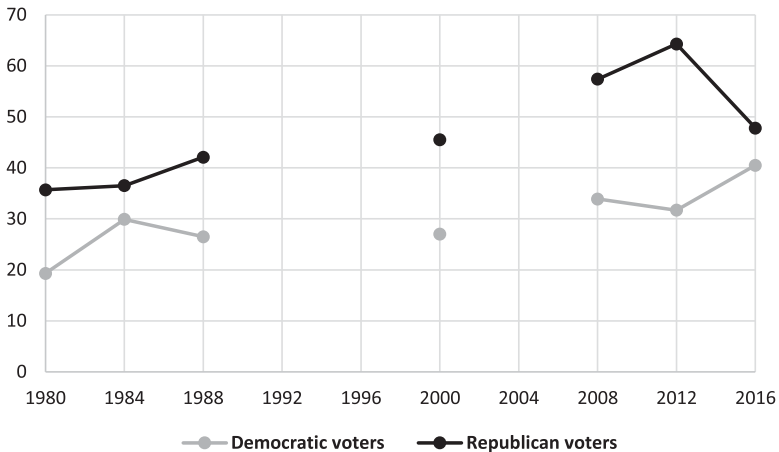


Sources: 1980–88: Pierce/Hagner/Knight archived datasets (ICSPR 8151) as recoded by the author for policy ideologues and merged with ANES datasets. 2000: coding of open-ended responses, obtained from William Jacoby, as recoded by the author for policy ideologues and merged with ANES dataset. 2008–2016: author’s coding of ANES open-ended responses and merged with ANES datasets.

most years for which data are available. However, the stunning insurgency campaigns of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders in 2016 seemed to bring the parties closer together in terms of conceptualization, with the Republicans becoming less ideologically oriented and the Democrats more so.

Trump was a far less ideological (conservative) figure than had been any Republican nominee in the previous 50 years. Although he could talk a good game regarding some conservative policies, on issues like foreign trade his stand sharply contradicted traditional conservative free-market dogma. Furthermore, his appeal was more rooted in identity politics than the Republican Party had ever seen before (Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck 2018). In 2012, there was little difference in the levels of conceptualization of voters who supported Romney in the primaries and those who supported another Republican. By contrast, Trump primary voters were over 20 percent less likely to be concept or policy ideologues than were those who supported a more traditional Republican candidate for the presidency. At the same time that Donald Trump was moving the Republicans away from its recent emphasis on

Figure 5. Pct. concept ideologues plus policy ideologues among voters



Sources: 1980–88: Pierce/Hagner/Knight archived datasets (ICSPR 8151) as recoded by the author for policy ideologues and merged with ANES datasets. 2000: coding of open-ended responses, obtained from William Jacoby, as recoded by the author for policy ideologues and merged with ANES dataset. 2008–2016: author’s coding of ANES open-ended responses and merged with ANES datasets.

ideology, Bernie Sanders appears to have led some Democrats away from their usual group-based way of thinking towards ideological purity. Far more than most Democratic presidential contenders, he emphasized ideological concepts (progressivism and democratic socialism) as well as policies. Voters who supported Sanders in the 2016 primaries were nearly twice as likely as those who voted for Hillary Clinton to be concept or policy ideologues.

The implications of the changes in the partisan patterns found between 2012 and 2016 are potentially quite great. If Democrats maintain their newfound ideological fervor and Republicans return to their normal level of concern with ideology and policy, then the nature of mass belief systems will move even further in the ideologue direction.

Education and Ideology

Between the rise in the proportion of voters who can be classified as concept ideologues and those who can be classified as policy ideologues,

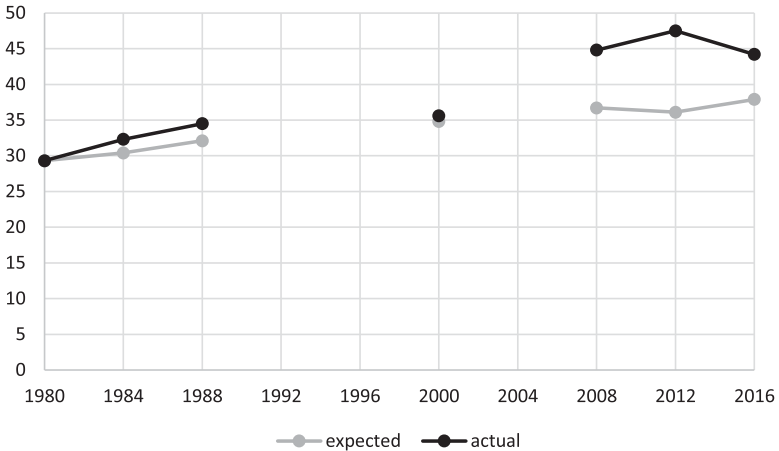
the continental shelf detected by Converse has shrunk considerably. With the combined total of these two groups reaching 48 percent in 2012 and 44 percent in 2016, the American electorate looks rather different than it did 60 years earlier, in the election survey so memorably analyzed by Converse. While political analysts continue to make the mistake against which Converse tried to warn them, the mistake is not as significant as it once was. If the lesson of *The American Voter* can be summed up as the political ignorance of the American electorate, the lesson of this paper is that nearly half of American voters have emerged into the realm of political “sophistication,” understood as ideological constraint. Where it used to be true that presidential elections could not be considered ideological referenda, now, to a great extent, they can.

This was somewhat predictable based on changes in the educational distribution of the electorate since 1980, but not entirely so. [Figure 6](#) shows the expected percentage of concept and policy ideologues based on the educational distribution in each year, as compared to the actual percentages found in the surveys I have been discussing. Between 1980 and 2000, the actual observations track what one would have expected based on educational levels. However, in the highly polarized environment of the 2008, 2012, and 2016 elections, the actual percentage of concept and policy ideologues was substantially higher than educational changes would have led us to expect. As elites have polarized and political debates have become more centered on ideology and policy, it may be that the once-“ignorant” public has picked up more and more on the resulting cues. Still, the question of why, or how, higher education produces greater political sophistication deserves far more attention than it has received. It seems likely that the relevance of this question to explaining political beliefs and voter behavior will continue to grow.

Converse did not suggest that political sophistication is an unmixed blessing. He connected sophistication to ideology and ideology not only to greater political knowledge, but greater political conviction. The convictions dictated by an ideology may not, however, be entirely rational. As he wrote in “The Nature of Belief Systems,”

Whatever may be learned through the use of strict logic as a type of constraint, it seems obvious that few belief systems of any range at all depend

Figure 6. Expected pct. of concept ideologues and policy ideologues among voters based on educational levels, compared to actual observations



Sources: 1980-88: Pierce/Hagner/Knight archived datasets (ICPSR 8151) as recoded by the author for policy ideologues and merged with ANES datasets. 2000: coding of open-ended responses, obtained from William Jacoby, as recoded by the author for policy ideologues and merged with ANES dataset. 2008-2016: author's coding of ANES open-ended responses and merged with ANES datasets.

for their constraint upon logic in this classical sense. Perhaps, with a great deal of labor, parts of a relatively tight belief system like that fashioned by Karl Marx could be made to resemble a structure of logical propositions. It goes without saying, however, that many sophisticated people have been swept away by the “iron logic” of Marxism without any such recasting. There is a broad gulf between strict logic and the quasi-logic of cogent argument. (Converse [1964] 2006, 6-7)

Nevertheless, Converse continued, “What is important is that the elites familiar with the total shapes of these belief systems have *experienced* them as logically constrained clusters of ideas, within which one part necessarily follows from another” (ibid., 7). No matter how illogical an ideology is, its adherents find it quite persuasive. Indeed, they may confer on the ideology the status of an unquestionable truth that only villains would deny.

This may shed light on some of the comments regarding Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump made by concept and policy ideologues in the 2016 ANES:

Do you know how to tell if Hillary is lying—her mouth is moving.

She is a devious person—evil.

She treats the little people like garbage.

She is very liberal, destroying the foundation on [*sic*] the way the US was built on Christianity.

She's anti-American; she should be brought up on treason.

She is a power hungry superficial fake individual who only cares about herself.

She is possibly the most corrupt and evil person to ever run for high office in the U.S.

I think she wants to make us communists.

He's a threat to democracy. He's unfit to lead the military, racist, xenophobic, and misogynistic.

He's a maniacal moron.

He seems completely unable to see truth from lies. I think he literally lives in his own world.

He seems like a modern-day Hitler. His policies range from not making sense to being outright offensive.

Depending on where you stand politically, these comments will contain many moments of insight and good sense, but—regardless of where you stand politically—taken as a whole, they suggest that stereotypes about polarization, to the point of extreme interpersonal hostility, are not without a basis in fact. Yet if nothing else, the vocabulary used by these respondents suggests that they are far more politically sophisticated than were most of the 1956 voters analyzed by Converse.

Whether political sophistication actually contributes to their vituperativeness is something else that warrants further research in a Conversean vein.

NOTES

1. The one dataset that contains codes for both ideologues and near ideologues is from the 2000 election. Although Converse coded these categories for 1956, as well as a multitude of sub-categories, this coding was lost when the data were archived with the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). Much to Converse's dismay, he found out too late that it was ICPSR's policy to remove any derived variables from survey datasets. Thus, Converse's actual coding, which had been derived from reading the interviews, was deleted from the 1956 dataset made available to the scholarly community. Fortunately, he had shared his coding with some colleagues over the years. William Flanagan at the University of Minnesota had taken the data that Converse provided him and recoded it into four levels of conceptualization (ideologues, group-benefits, nature-of-the-times, no issue content) for a small dataset that he had his students analyze. These data are the only surviving levels of conceptualization data from 1956 and can be found in ICPSR 8151.
2. The full coding instructions for the 1956 study can be found in Pierce 1969. My best guess is that these instructions were either done for Converse's own dissertation or for the use of Converse's second coder, who coded 211 cases as part of a reliability test. A copy of the full 1956 coding instructions is available from the author upon request.
3. The transcripts of the interviews from 1952 to 1964 were microfilmed many years ago and are stored by the ANES staff in Ann Arbor, Michigan. I had the very interesting experience of reading through some of the interviews from these years for another project.
4. The codes that I counted in the ANES cumulative file were: 903-904, 906-907, 909-910, 912-913, 915-916, 918-919, 921-922, 924-925, 930-933, 944-945, 947-948, 950-951, 963-964, 969-978, 980-981, 983-984, 986-987, 989-990, 992-993, 995-996, 1002-1003, 1005-1006, 1008-1009, 1015-1016, 1020-1021, 1023-1024, 1029-1030, 1039-1040, 1041-1042, 1044-1045, 1048-1049, 1057-1058, 1060-1061, 1063-1064, 1066-1067, 1069-1070, 1104-1005, 1106-1107, 1108-1109, 1111-1112, 1114-1115, 1121-1122, 1126-1127, 1131-1132, 1136-1137, 1160-1161, 1165-1166, 1168-1169, 1171-1176, 1185-1186, and 1191-1192.
5. The 2004 data have not been coded for levels of conceptualization and the actual responses are not readily available. In order to do any coding of the 1952-2004 responses, one would have to journey to Ann Arbor and review all the responses at the University of Michigan. Fortunately, starting in 2008, the ANES has made all the responses available for anyone to read in Excel files.
6. John Pierce, who did coding of the 1964 and other early election studies, wrote to me on July 19, 2019: "As I recall, Converse and we coded those as near-ideologues, if the multiple issue positions seemed to hang together, even if the ideological terms were not used."
7. As every respondent was asked the open-ended questions in the pre-election interview, I can think of no explanation for the exclusion of pre-election data for respondents who did not agree to be re-interviewed after the election. The one principal investigator (John Pierce) whom I was able to contact regarding this matter had no recollection of why this was done.

8. For the one election study (2000) where data are available for Converse's ideologues and near ideologues separately, ideologues had a mean score of only 3 percent higher than near ideologues on the political knowledge index.
9. There are not enough cases of policy ideologues from the 1970s to do a reliable analysis. Data from 1992, 1996, and 2004 were never coded for ideological conceptualization.

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