The Electoral Basis of political instability in the United States, 1937-2016

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In 1992, when the Democrats regained full control of the government for the first time since 1980, many scholars and pundits concluded that the end of divided government would enable the country to move forward on pressing problems like healthcare, the recession, and the restoration of those who "played by the rules" to their rightful place (see Sundquist, 1993). (In his acceptance speech in 1992, Bill Clinton said "...for too long those who play by the rules...have gotten the shaft, and those who cut corners and cut deals have been rewarded." and if elected, he would stop this from happening.) The joy was short-lived as the 1994 off-year elections gave Republicans, touting their Contract with America, control of both the House and Senate for the first time in 40 years. The Clinton presidency looked as though it would be a one-term job, with Republicans set to control all branches of government after 1996 for the first time in 44 years and only the second time in 68 years. Clinton's victory, with the Republicans holding the House and increasing their numbers in the Senate, yielded divided government with a different face: Democratic President, Republican Congress.

The Bush victory over Gore in 2000, albeit with a minority of the votes cast, gave Republicans their first unified control of government since Eisenhower in 1952, and they hoped it would last longer than Ike's mere two years. The Bush victory in 2004 meant six years of undivided Republican control of the government, which led some to speculate that Bush and Rove had pulled off a McKinley-like realignment favoring the Republican Party. But the war in Iraq and other issues gave Democrats a huge win in 2006, stripping the Republicans of both Houses of Congress.

The major Obama win in 2008 gave the Democrats their first 60-seat Senate majority since Jimmy Carter and their highest House totals since 1990. These major victories led the pollster pundit James Carville (and two co-authors) to write a book entitled *40 More Years: How Democrats Will Rule the Next Generation* (2009). Generations apparently do not last long because in the 2010 Democratic debacle, Republicans gained Senate seats and retook the House, driving the Democrats from 257 seats down to 193. Again, Republican hopes were high, and many believed they could regain control of the government in two years. The 2012 election continued the stalemate, however, with Democrats taking the presidency and Senate and with Republicans holding the House. The 2014 elections yielded 1994-like results, with both houses solidly Republican, and the 247 House members was a greater number than Republicans had achieved since 1928. The 2016 presidential primary season continued to yield surprises and instability as Bernie Sanders, a Socialist Senator from Vermont, came close to beating Mrs. Clinton, and Donald Trump confounded the Republican establishment by winning the nomination.

What has happened to put American politics into its current state of indecision? In this paper I argue that the electoral basis of the indecision is secular realignment of American politics which has resulted in a close balance between the two parties and Independent voters. The secular realignment essentially sorted the parties to be purer--few if any conservatives in the Democratic party and few or no liberals in the Republican Party and an ever increasing number of citizens willing to say when asked that they are Independents. The paper proceeds as follows: first, a review of secular versus realignment theory; second, an analysis of the nature of the shifts in party loyalty; third, an analysis of the 1980 to 1990 decade where the major

changes occurred followed by changes since 1990 in party identification; and finally an analysis of Independent voters as closet partisans.

The 2008 American presidential election results caused many journalists and some political scientists to revive, however briefly, the notion of electoral realignment (Caswell, 2009). The original paper on realignments by V.O. Key appeared in 1955 and argued that some elections result in a "sharp alteration of the pre-existing cleavage within the electorate" and that "the realignment made manifest in the voting in such elections seems to persist for several succeeding elections." (Key, page 4, 1955) The theory of realigning elections and its constituent parts dominated the research on elections throughout the 1980s but by the time of the 2008 elections had clearly fallen from favor (Mayhew, 2002). No election since 1932 had clearly produced Key's requirement for an alteration of the former political alignment and the subsequent electoral victories of the new alignment. The 1964 and 1972 victories were large in scope but neither coalition persisted for even a single election. In regard to controlling government, Clinton's victory in 1992 and 1996 and Bush's 2000 and 2004 victories could not be transferred to their party in the first non-incumbent elections. Ronald Reagan's 1980 victory and the Republican victories in 1984 and 1988 probably come closest to the notion of a critical election. Indeed, one prominent scholar (Norpoth, 2002) argues that 1980 was a realigning or critical election, at least in terms of changes in party identification.

In this paper, we shall not argue that there has been a critical election post 1932; rather, we take a second paper of V.O. Key's on secular realignment (1959) and argue that by a secular realignment criteria, much has changed in American politics post 1930s. Key argued that "the party process is thrown into a different interpretive framework if one supposes the existence of processes of long-term or secular shifts in party attachment among the voters." Most eloquently, he states "Some elections may be "critical" in that they involve far wider movements and more durable shifts than do other elections. Yet the rise and fall of parties may to some degree be the consequence of trends that perhaps persist over decades and elections may mark only steps in a more or less continuous creation of new loyalties and decay of old." (Key, 1959, p. 198) The mechanism (s) through which such change occurs differ from migration to retrospective evaluations of political parties' policy choices (Fiorina). However, the point for our purposes is that the change is gradual, not dramatic.

This paper utilizes over 900 Gallup Polls taken from 1937 through 2016 to investigate secular realignment in American politics. We examine shifts in partisan identifications and electoral representation in the United States at large and across the regions that comprise America. The results clearly show that while there may have been no classical realignment or critical election post 1932, there clearly has been extensive secular realignment.

Beginning in 1937, Gallup polls began asking voters their party identification. Over the 1937 to 2016 time period, Gallup's first question, like the American National

Election Studies (NES), asks whether the respondent thinks of herself as a Democrat, Republican or Independent, followed in the NES questionnaire by a strength of party identification question and a follow-up asking if Independents in question 1 lean toward one or the other party. Unlike the NES, Gallup does not ask a strong or weak party identification question but, beginning in the 1960s, they do ask those respondents who have declared their independence on the first question (the Gallup equivalent of the NES) whether they lean Republican or Democrat. In the body of the paper, we use the first question alone to show the relative percentages of Democrats, Republicans and Independents in the electorate over time (Warren Miller, 1969). In the footnotes and the paper, we use leaners as well as party identifiers to create a 5 point scale and compare results with our three point scale.

A comparison of Gallup results over time with those of the ANES studies (figure 1) show a reasonably good match. Democrats have been the dominant party over most of this time period, and both Gallup and NES polls show this over the time series.[1] From 1956 through 2008, the Democratic numbers match up for both polls, whereas from 1984 to 2004, the NES has between 3 and 10 percent more Democrats than does the Gallup data. The data for Republican party identification shows a pattern where NES and Gallup move around as to who shows the most Republican identifiers. However, beginning in the 1980s, NES consistently shows fewer Republicans than does Gallup. The pattern for Independents does not show consistent polling differences and both show the clear rise of Independents as a proportion of the electorate. On the whole, we believe that our numbers generated

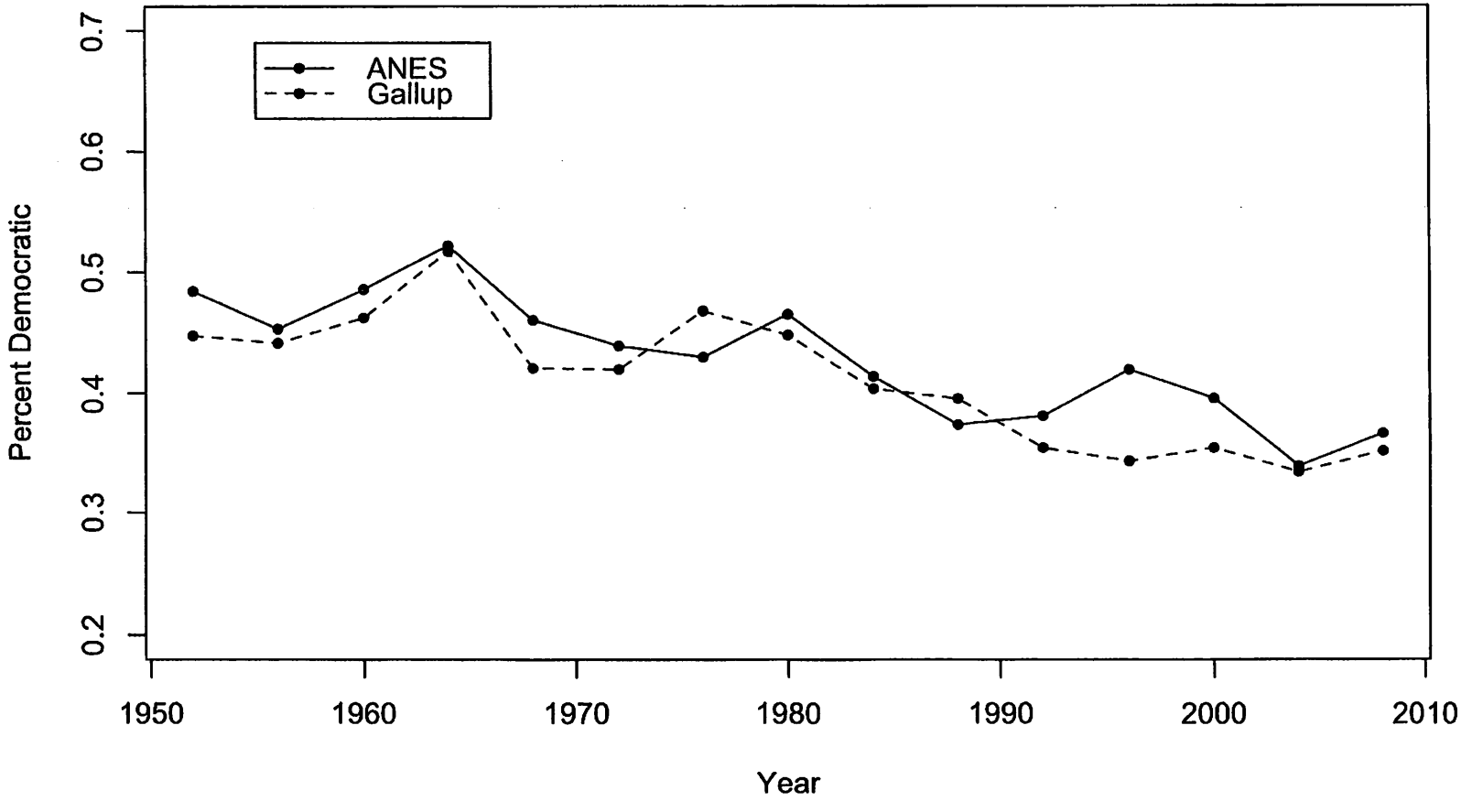
[1] The NES data set begins in 1952, thus the starting point for the comparison.

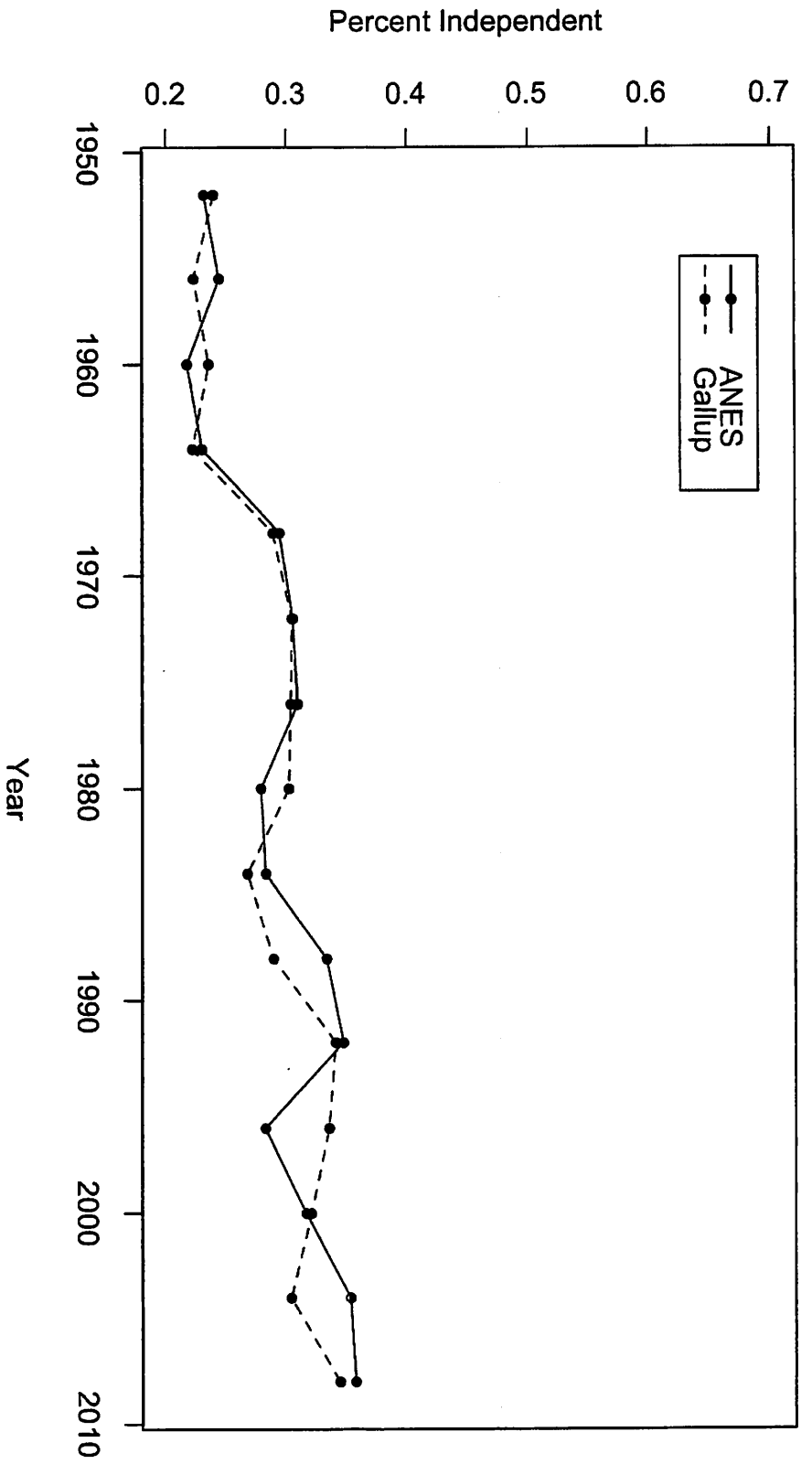
by the series of Gallup polls we coded are reasonably accurate at any one point in time and given the number of polls, very accurate over time.

We begin with a presentation of two figures for the United States as a whole and then duplicate those figures for each of the regions of the United States. The figures show first party identification over time with Independents included. The second figure shows Democratic party identification with the percent of House seats won by Democrats over the time period. Analysis in this section is straightforward, describing changing patterns of party identification and the corresponding changes.

Figure 1: A Comparison of American National Election Studies Party Identification to Gallup Numbers, 1952—2008

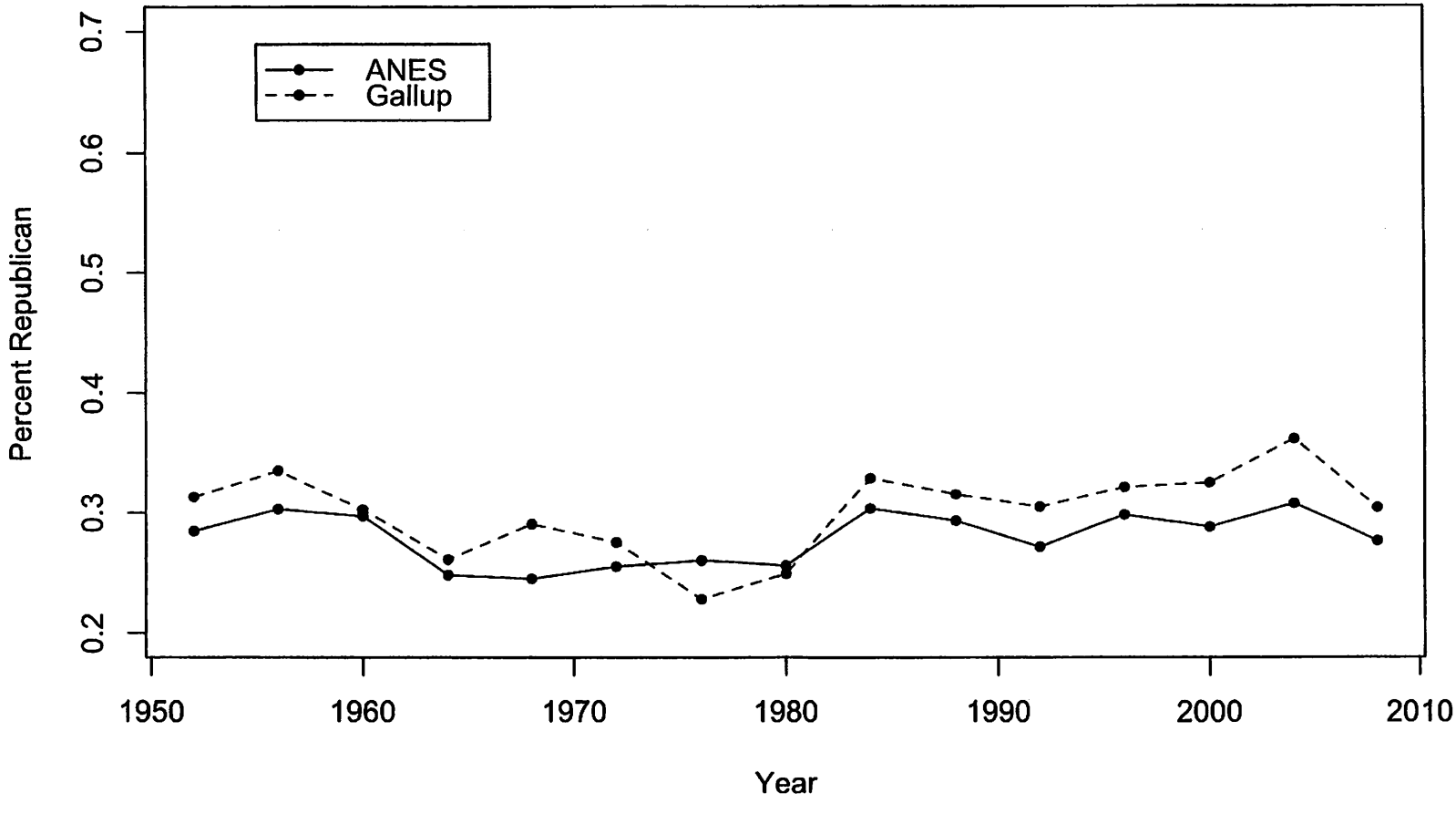
A: Democrats





B: Independents

C: Republicans



Over the 1937 to 2016 period, Figure 2 and 2A and Bshows that the Democrats have gone from a majority party with over 50 percent identification to a party with roughly a 33 percent plurality. These changes were not very dramatic until the 1980s when the Democrats fell from the mid 40s to about 35 percent in 1988 and, with some variation, they have remained the party of choice for about one third of the electorate. The elections from 1936 to 1980 reflected Democratic dominance in identification, winning seven of eleven presidential elections and controlling the House of Representatives and the Senate in twenty one of twenty three elections. The shift away from Democrats, beginning in the 1980s, had important electoral consequences. Republicans since 1980, not Democrats, have won five of nine presidential elections. More importantly, in the eighteen Congresses from 1980 to the present, five had mixed party control of Congress, and seven times the Congress was controlled by Republicans and six times by Democrats. In the 1937 to 1980 period, the probability that the Democratic Party controlled all three branches of government was above .9, while in the post period it was **.11** -- a dramatic shift.

Figure 2: National Party Identification: 1937—2008

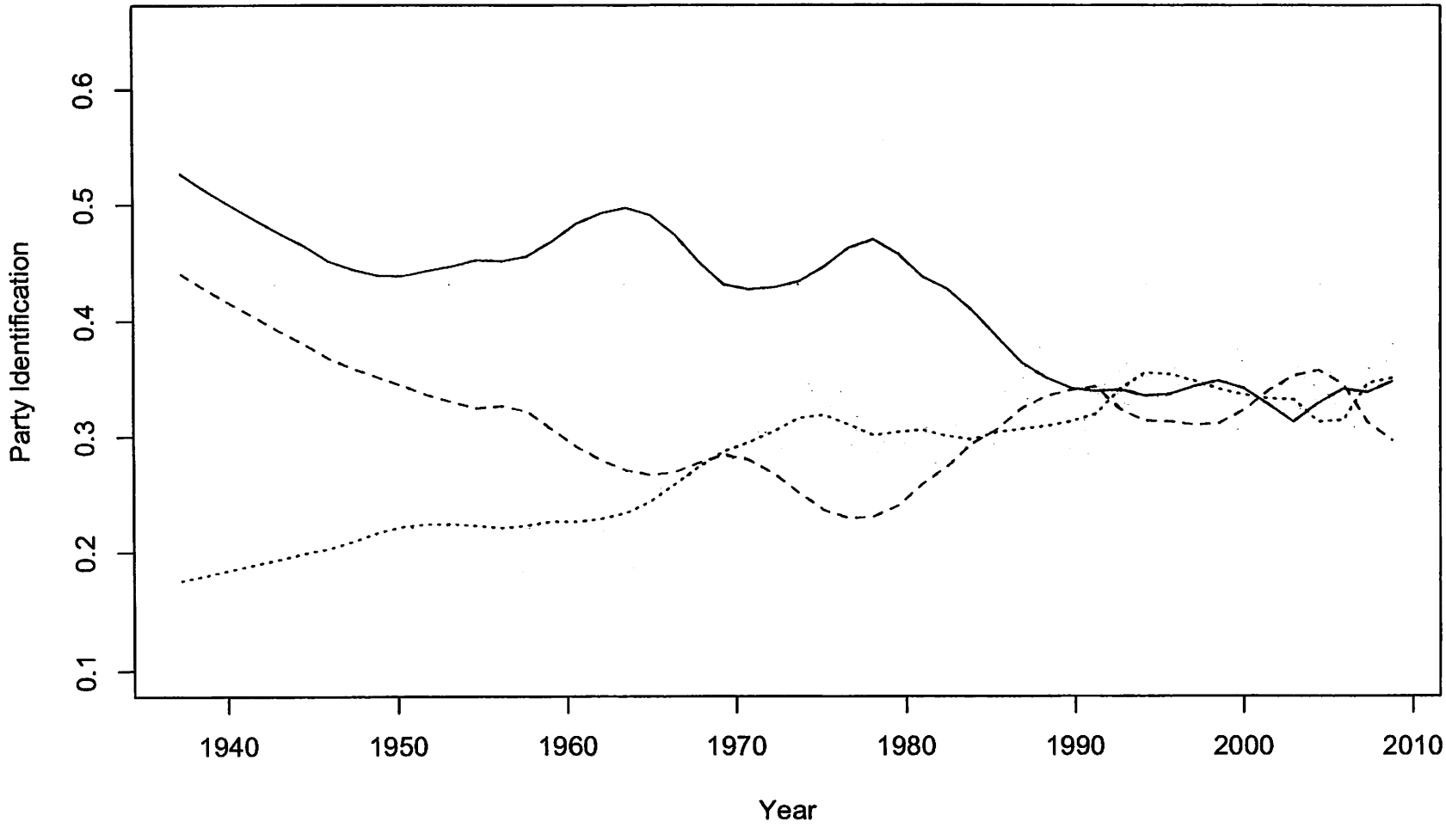
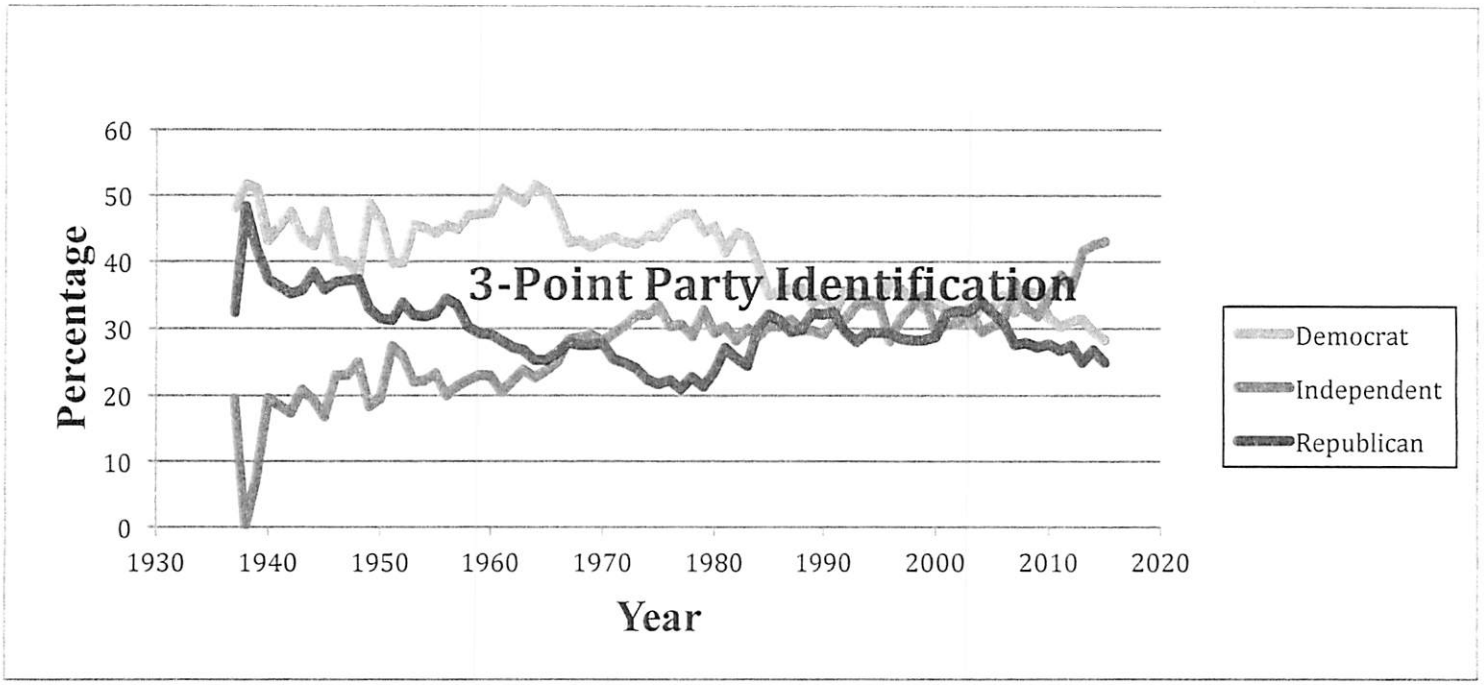
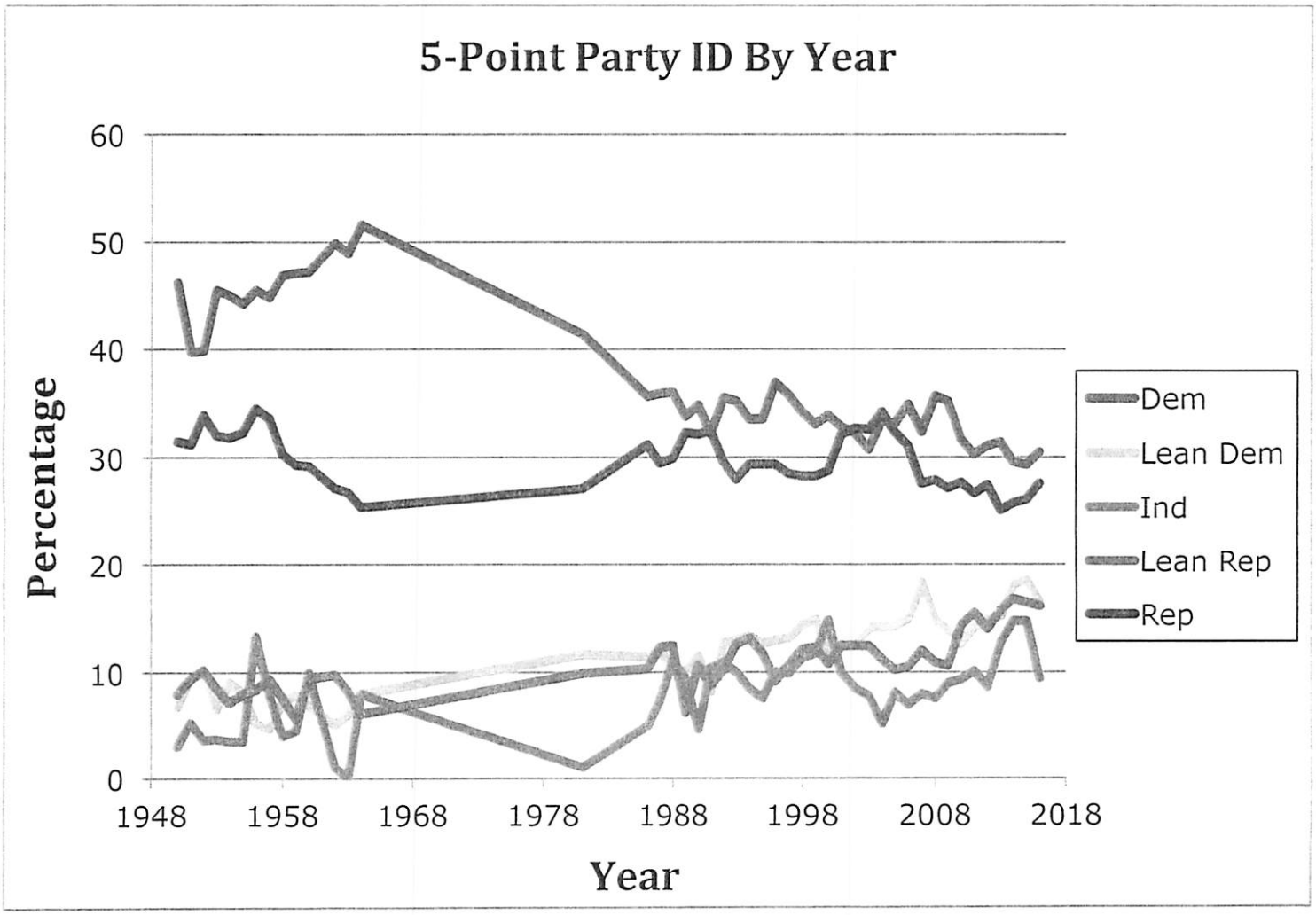


Figure 2 A and B :Gallup yearly party figures for 3 and and 5 point scales



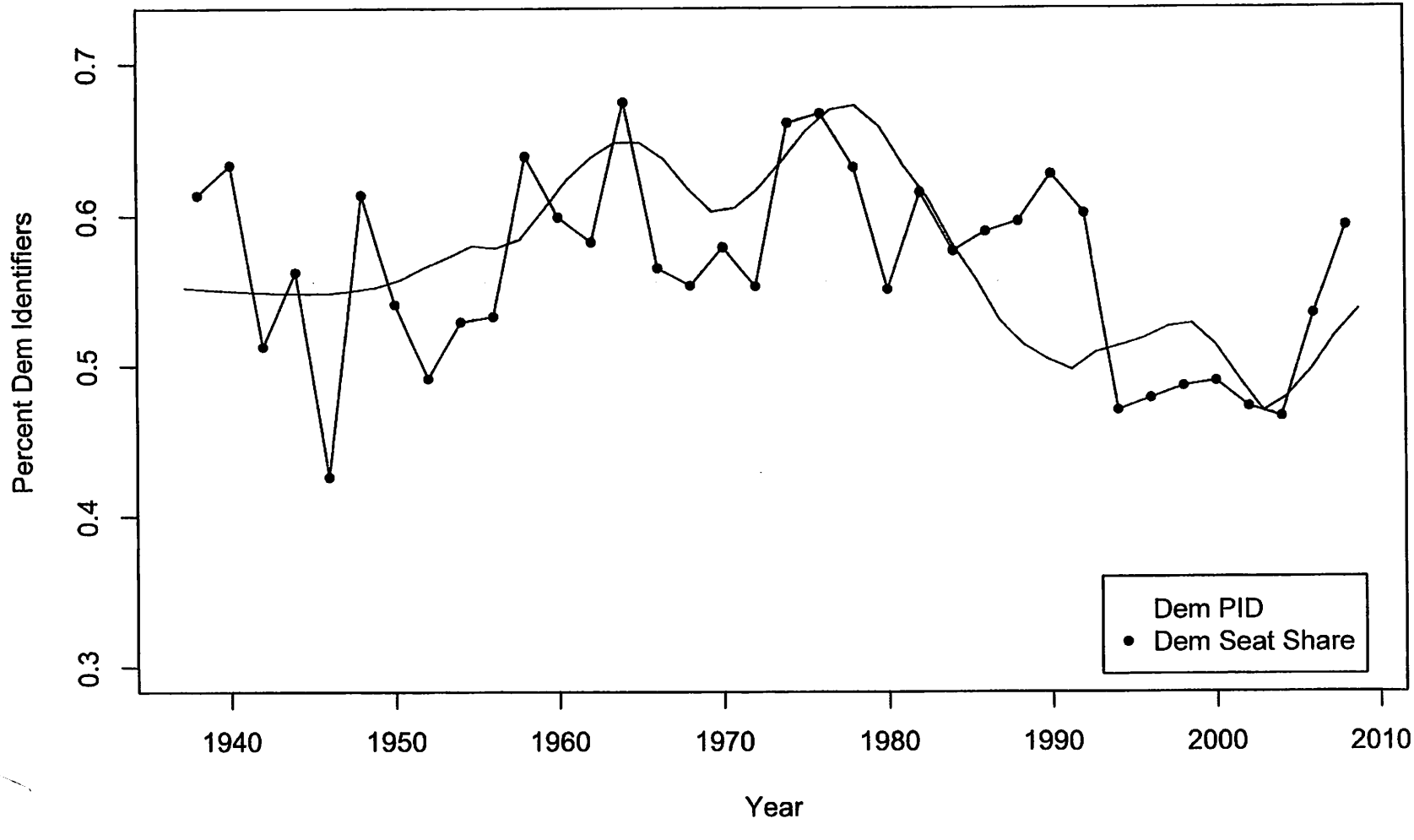


The Republican Party over this time period has, like the Democrats, lost members over the period, but, with the resurgence of the 1980s, their overall identifiers approximate the Democratic identifiers. In three years their totals are equal or surpass Democrats (1991, 2002 and 2004); however in no case do they have a lead of even1 percent. When the time series begins, Republicans are clearly a minority party, down about ten points to the dominant party. Over the 1950s, in spite of Eisenhower's popularity, Republicans as a percentage of the electorate dropped slightly more rapidly than did Democratic identifiers. The 1960s, particularly 1964, were not good years for Republicans. Democratic identifiers rose to over 50 percent in 1960, 61and 65, while Republicans fell below thirty percent in 1959 and stayed there for over thirty years.

The electoral results over the data set show this. From 1937 to 1980, the probability that Republicans would control government was less than .05, with only the 83rd Congress fitting the bill. In the post-1980 period, the probability of Republican control is .21 , a fourfold jump.

Figure 3 shows that party identification at the beginning of the period is Democratic and so, too, are a majority of House seats, with Republicans winning the majority only twice, from 1937 to 1994. Democrats remained dominant in House elections, even though their numbers shrank and Independents and Republicans increased. In the mid 1980s, party strength is about equal, yet from 1982 to 1992, Democratic candidates have far higher electoral rates than their percent of party identification

Figure 3: Democratic Party Identification and National Seat Share: 1937—2015

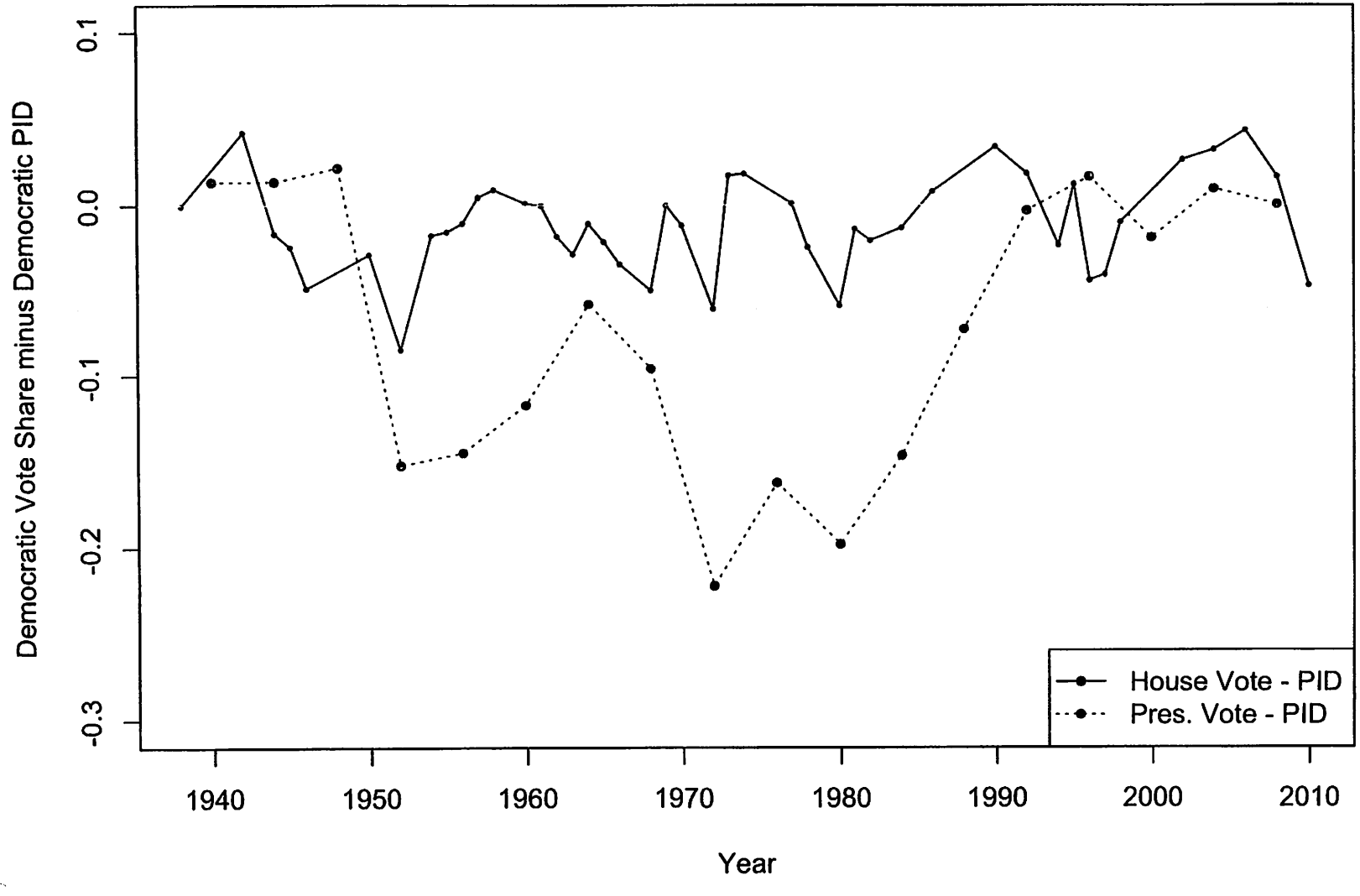


in House election results would warrant.[2] The 1994 election is the first where Republicans win a majority, and from 1994 to 2006, Republicans have more seats than their party numbers warrant. This distortion is clearly because the number of Independents has grown and is often a plurality. Given that Independent identifiers have to elect Republican or Democratic representatives, the distortions shown in Figure 3 occur. In sum, for the first 30 or so years of polling data, Democrats had around 50 percent saying they identified while 30 or so percent were Republican. In 1968, the number of Independents rose to about 30 percent and, with the exception of the early Reagan years, stayed there until the recent period, where they are a plurality and electoral results followed shifts in party identification.

Figure 4 takes the Democratic vote share on the generic House ballot minus the Democratic party identification numbers -the black line- and contrasts that with the two party Democratic share of the vote for president minus party identification. The dotted line in the figure is zero; thus, whenever the lines are above zero the Democrats are doing better than party identification would indicate and below zero means they are doing worse than you would expect given identity. From 1952 to 1988 Democratic presidential candidates did worse than you would expect while in the new system they are doing about what one would expect given party identification. Notice that in House elections Democrats are getting about what you would expect conditional on identity. The Democratic drop in party strength in the 1980s set up the Republican takeover of the House in 1994. In sum, voters were

[2] Here incumbency and the personal vote help account for Democrats' strength in elections.

Figure 4: Democratic party Identification and House and presidential elections



willing to vote for other party candidates at the presidential level but not at the House level. When the switch in party identification occurred in the 1980's the House followed but not for a decade(See Han and Brady, 2004 for an explanation of the delay).

While neither party has been able to sustain its late New Deal numbers, the number of Independents has steadily grown *over* this time series. They grew from about 16 percent in the late New Deal (1937-39) to over 30 percent in the mid 1970s, to over one third in the post-Reagan era. Indeed, in some polls the Independents were already the plurality choice. What these numbers mean depends in part upon what it means to be Independent, and here question wording matters, as a rich literature in survey research shows. In a later section of the paper, we return to this question, but for our present purposes, it is enough to say that there has been a significant rise in the numbers of Independents and that this rise has implications for the party system.

A Summary of Regional Electoral Shifts-1937 to 2016

The nature of secular realignment is regional and as Key showed in his original paper, New England shifted from being a bastion of Republicanism in the mid New Deal era to being solidly Democratic over time. An analysis of the changes in time over all the regions in the United States is time consuming for the reader so I include the analysis of the regions in Appendix A and offer a summary of the regional analysis herein. The two regions that began the time series as Democratic and ended it as Democratic were the Border and Pacific states. The political parties were

essentially at parity in the Mid-Atlantic region in 1937 and end up as Democratic. These three regions show the least change, which is not to say there was no change--just least relative to others. In all three, the overall Democratic proportion has declined over the entire period after gains in the 1960s and1970s associated with the decline of the Republicans with Goldwater and Watergate. Moreover, in all three regions Republican fortunes rose in the 1980s only to decline with Bush post 2004. In two of the three regions, Independents are now in second place, ahead of Republicans. In regard to House seats, changes in party identification distributions have driven congressional election results and with the exception of California in the 1946 to 1958 period, Democrats have dominated House elections. Presidential results don't follow party identification as Republican presidential candidates have done well in both the Border states and, at various times, better than their numbers would indicate in the Pacific states.

Three regions began the time series as Republican and ended as either Democratic or at equal shares. The Midwest and New England states have become Democratic while the Plains states are at political parity in reidentification. New England had Democratic pluralities by 1960, while in the Mid-West by 1960 the parties were even steven. In the Plains states, the 1964 election shifted the party results to the Democrats. In each of the regions the 1964 election gave Democrats a sharp upward bump which they began to lose with the 1980 election. The Republican shift in the 1980s put Republicans at parity in the Mid-West and with a slight advantage

in the Plains states. In contrast, Republican gains in the 1980s never made Republicans the majority or plurality party in New England. By 2006, Democrats were on the rise which, combined with a decline in Republican identifiers, made Democrats the majority party in Mid-West and New England states and brought them to parity in the Plains states.

In House elections, the Republicans were the majority until 1960 in all three regions. Party identification leads House elections, with New England being the most Democratic, follow by the Mid-West and Plains states. The shift towards Republicans in the 1980s and the 1994 election specifically boosted Republican House seats in all regions, even yielding Republican majorities in the Plains states. Again, the Presidential vote was not well correlated to party identification.

Three regions began the period as Democratic and ended as Republican, and in two of those regions --- the South and Southwest --- they went from heavily Democratic to begin, to solidly Republican. The Rockies region was less Democratic but is today solidly Republican. In all regions, Democrats fall off during the 1930s, 40s and 50s, with fall off less pronounced in the Rocky Moutain states. The Goldwater election hardly caused an upward bump in the Democratic percentages in the South and Southwest whereas, in contrast, the Democrats in the Rocky Mountain states did get a boost. The 1970s, with Watergate and its aftermath, plus a Southern Democratic nominee in 1976 yielded an upward tick in Democratic fortunes. However, it was not until 1994 that the Republicans become a majority or plurality party and take over one-half of the congressional seats in the Southwest and South. The

Republicans outnumbered Democrats in the Rocky Mountain states by the 1980s and achieved an electoral majority success earlier. All of these regions were voting Republican for President long before the Republicans were a plurality.

In 1937, Democrats were clearly the majority party, with their identifiers outnumbering Republicans with Independents below 20% of the electorate. By the 1950s, in spite of this Democratic advantage in identification, Republican presidential candidates ran well ahead of identification, including Nixon in 1960. The Goldwater campaign caused a rise in Democratic identification and a drop in Republican identification. However, by 1968 there was a dramatic increase in Independents. Nixon won in 1968 and again in 1972, running well ahead of Republican identification. The Watergate era yielded another decrease in Republican identifiers and an increase in Democrats plus a slight rise in Independents. The Reagan years brought an increase in Republican identifiers, a corresponding decrease in Democrats, and a leveling of Independents. Since 1994, the Democrats have generally held a slight lead, sometimes yielding to Independents as a plurality. House electoral change generally follows identification changes while presidential voting does not reflect identification. From 1937 to the early 1990s, Democratic identifiers were either a majority or a plurality of the electorate and they dominated House elections. In their majority period, where Republicans were never within 6 or fewer percentage points, Republican presidential candidates nonetheless won 6 of 11 elections. In the House over the same period, 21 out of 23

elections went Democratic. In the 1984 to 2016 period, where party identification is more equal, Republicans won 5 of 9 presidential elections and 10 of 17 House elections.

In the body and in the review we have treated presidential votes and House seats as they are related to party identification shifts and have not dealt with the U.S. Senate. In part, this is because the Gallup poll does not consistently ask about Senate voting; thus, trying to compare the Senate to the House set would be misleading, and the Senate questions are so infrequent that even a separate Senate time series would not be representative. Another reason to not include the Senate elections is that because they occur only every six years, they lag changes in identification much more than do the House elections, which are every two years, and in the case of some Senate incumbents, the lag can be decades. Consider the case of West Virginia. West Virginia started to vote Republican during the Reagan era and since 2000 has voted Republican in four straight presidential elections which, of course, includes both of President Obama's victories, and at present they have three Republicans and no Democrats in the U.S. House. In addition, the 2014 race for the Senate seat left vacant by the retirement of Jay Rockefeller went to the Republicans by a 28 percent margin. It seems clear that for over a decade, West Virginia as a state has leaned Republican and since the mid-1980s has been moving Republican. If we look only at the Senate, we certainly could not see this, since from 1958, the state has been represented by Democrats, including Robert Byrd, who served from 1958

to 2010 and Jay Rockefeller, who served from 1984 to 2014. The personal vote attached to these two men was such that they were reelected and reelected, even though the state was moving Republican. In short, the U.S. Senate is a hard place to measure the effect of changes in party identification because lag time can be decades. In the section that follows, we use different measures to show that even Senate elections follow shifts in party identification, albeit with rather long time lags. We break the states into the same regions we did for the analysis of the House and presidential elections: first, regions moving Republican, then regions moving Democratic, and then the regions with less change.

In an attempt to show lagged time Senate results driven by changes in party identification, we took each state's Senators in each Congress from 1936 to 2014 and recorded them as same party (both Senators in the Congress of one party), Democrat or Republican or mixed (one from each party).[3] We chose 1985 as a break point because, as the next chapter will show, the decade of the 1980s was crucial for creating the current party system. The idea is that if a region is Democratic at the beginning of our era and is moving Republican, the state should have a greater concentration of two Democratic Senators prior to 1985 and a higher percent of mixed or two Republican Senators post 1985 and vice versa for states and regions moving Democrat from Republican.

We begin with the three regions that moved most toward the Republican Party: the South, Southwest and Border states (Table 1).

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3 In the case of Independent Senators, we counted them with the party they caucused with.

TABLE 1

REGIONS GOING DEMOCRAT TO REPUBLICAN

	DD (%)	RR(%)	M(%)	Ratio D to R	Rat. D, R+M
Pre-1985	68	07	25	9.2 - 1	2.1 - 1
Post-1985	26	38	36	.68 - 1	.36 - 1
Difference	-42	+31	+11	-8.5	-1.75

In the period from 1936 to 1985, across these 18 states 68 percent of the time they had two Democratic Senators, while the same figure for the Republicans is seven percent. The ratio of same state Democratic Senators to Republican same state Senators is 9.2 to 1, and the ratio of same state Democrat to Republican, plus mixed state Senators is 2.1 to 1 Democrat. Thus, prior to 1985 these three regions were decidedly Democratic at the level of Senate elections. In the post-1985 period, the 68 percent Democratic in the pre period turns to 26 percent and the comparable figure for Republicans representing a state jumps to 38 percent. The pre ratios favoring Democrats to Republican same state Senators at over 9 to 1 turns to .68 as Republicans *have* a 1.77 to 1 advantage over Democrats. The ratio of Democratic Senators in a state to Republican plus mixed states moves from 2.1 to 1 pre to .36 post 1985. All this clearly indicates that these regions have moved from Democrat to Republican.

If one moves the time line back to accommodate lagged Senate results, the change becomes more apparent. Moving the time line to 1994, for example, jumps the Republican same state Senators from 1.77 to 1 to about 2.4 to 1, and the further you move the time line back, the

higher the Republican to Democratic ratio. If you took Maryland, a Democratic state, out of the data, and West Virginia, because the Bird, Rockefeller lag is quite high, the ratio goes to around 4.4 to 1. The major point to make, however, is that these regions which went Republican at the presidential level first, then at the House level, eventually moved Republican at the Senate level, following the shift in party identification. The shift is not as dramatic because in Senate elections party identification gives one party the advantage in baseline vote, but in these high information elections, good candidates often upset the other party's advantage. North Dakota and Montana are both very Republican states, having since 1965 voted Democratic (in Montana with Clinton winning with a razor margin) once, with all other presidential elections being Republican. Yet when the 113th Congress began, Montana had two Democratic Senators: Jon Texter, a rancher-farmer and former president of the Montana Senate who, in 2006 beat the scandal plagued incumbent narrowly, and Max Baucus, the chair of the Finance Committee. North Dakota, against the odds, adds Heidi Heitkamp, an appealing former attorney general who narrowly won in 2012. These Senators take positions and vote as necessary to maintain their reelection possibilities. Which meant, for example, on the April 2013 legislation to increase background checks on gun buyers, Heitkamp voted against the President and with the majority opinion in her state. In short, Senate races are more high profile than House races which, plus the six year term, makes the lag time for following party identification shifts potentially quite high. Yet follow they will, as over time a party's advantage will come into play, and this is the case for the three regions that moved Republican over our time period. The pattern varied from state to state over these 18 states as Maryland, for example, turns Democrat faster than West Virginia becomes

Republican. Our point is that across the region, Senate election results in the end reflect state (aggregated with regions) party identification.

The states that moved from Republican to Democrat, New England, Mid-Atlantic and Pacific West, show the same pattern (Table 2).

TABLE 2

REGIONS GOING REPUBLICAN TO DEMOCRAT

	RR(%)	DD(%)	M(%)	Ratio R to D	Ratio R to D +M
Pre-1985	36	23	41	1.6 to 1	.56 to 1
Post-1985	22	47	31	.47 to 1	.28 to 1
Difference	-14	+24	-10	-1.13	-.28

In the pre-1985 period, Democratic same-state Senators were 23 percent of all cases, compared to 36 percent for Republican same-state Senators, and the ratio of Republicans to Democrats in same party states was 1.6 to 1. The ratio' of Republican to Democratic states, plus mixed representation states, was .57, showing that in the pre period, a little over 40 percent of the time the three regions had mixed representation. In the post-1985 period, the Republican percentage falls to 22 percent, while the Democratic more than doubles to 47 percent. The ratio of Republicans to Democrats falls to .48 and the ratio to Democrats plus mixed falls to .28. The Democrats move from being down by a ratio of 1.6 to 1 to a 2.1 to 1 advantage of their own. If you move the time line forward to 1994 as we did for the previous

Republican regions, the results improve for Democrats, and they hold a 3 to 1 advantage in these regions. Thus, as was the case for the more Republican regions, the Senate results lag, but over time the party identification advantage shows up.

There were two regions where the Republicans had held the advantage in the 1940s and over our time frame they maintained their advantage with some highs (1972) and lows (1964) along the way. The Rocky Mountain states and the Plains states are the two regions where we do not expect much change pre and post-1985; rather, we expect the Republican advantage in the region to persist. In these two regions, prior to 1985, Republicans had same-state representation 36 percent of the time to the Democrats' 19 percent, which yields a ratio of 1.8 Republican to Democrat. About half of the time prior to 1985, these states were represented by mixed party delegations. The Republican to Democrat plus mixed ration is .56. In the post-1985 period, Republicans win both state Senators 42 percent of the time compared to Democrats' 21 percent, with 38 percent being the percentage for mixed party representation. The Republican to Democrat ratio increased to 2.02 to 1, and Republican to Democrat plus mixed is .71. In short, as expected there is little difference in the two eras, with the post-1985 era being a little more Republican and a little less mixed party state delegation. There is less lag in these regions because they have been Republican for a longer time frame.

The final region is the Midwest, which consists of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. These states have been relatively competitive over the entire time period, and one quick way to show that is to point to the fact that pre-1985, 45 percent of the time these states had mixed delegations ala Douglas and Dirksen of Illinois and post-1985, they

had such delegations 43 percent of the time. The ratio of mixed to Democrat plus Republican is .85 pre-1985 and .76 percent post-1985. In Senate races, Democrats have had the plurality both pre and post 1985, and post-1985 they have actually done a little better, while Republican same-party holdings have declined. The Democratic Senate lead post-1994 has increased and, at present, Michigan and Minnesota have Democratic delegations and Illinois and Wisconsin did for most of the 1994 - 2014 period. The region has been competitive over most of our time series, but Democrats have been more successful at the senatorial level over the past twenty years.

Another way to show the change in the Senate from 1937 to the present with 1985 as the breakpoint is to calculate Democratic success in the aggregate. From 1937 until 1985, Democrats averaged 58 seats out of 100 (percentages used prior to Alaska and Hawaii in 1960) whereas post-1985 they average 51 seats over 14 elections. In the 1937 to 1960 time period, Democrats have 60 seats or over four times, and in between 1961 and 1984, six of thirteen elections they had 60 seats or over. In contrast, between 1985 and the present, they had 60 seats just once in 2009 (Congress) and it did not last a full session, as Scott Brown won election as Ted Kennedy's replacement, reducing Democrats to 59. The difference between pre and post 1985 is significant.

Change from 1980 to 1990

In this section the purpose is to show that the 1980s were the transformative decade; thus, we now turn to the decade in detail to analyze where the change occurred. We analyze region, education, gender, cohort and ideology.

In the 1976 presidential election, exit polls showed that Gerry Ford won 20 percent of Democratic identification, 89 percent of Republicans and 52 percent of Independents, and he lost. Given the Gallup party distribution of 46.2 percent Democrat to 22.3 Republican, multiplying Ford's vote by party identification predicts Carter to win with about 54 percent of the vote. If we took the same .20, .89, .52 voting percentages and multiplied them by the 1990 party identification numbers, the Republican candidate wins with 52.7 percent of the vote. The changes over this decade are what created the current 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 electoral base for gridlock in the United States. The same analysis for the 1988 election shows the Republican win to be the result of only having to make up a 6.3 percent party gap. The 1988 exit polls show Bush with 17 percent of Democrats, 92 percent of Republicans and 57 percent of Independents and, given the changed shape of the party distribution, predicts Bush to win with 52.8 percent of the vote. If we had substituted the same Bush percentages for Democrats, Republicans and Independents, with the 1980, 1981or 1982 party distributions, he would have lost by over eight percentage points. What happened? Where did the change come from?

Table 3 shows changes in party identification by region from 1980 and 1990, with 95 percent confidence intervals in brackets. The most dramatic finding is that in every region, Republicans gain and Democrats lose, even in the Plains and Rocky Mountain states where

Republicans had leads to begin with. Republicans gained most in the South and Southwest (14.5 and 13.6, respectively) but had gains of over nine points in the Mid-Atlantic states and the Midwest, with gains of over seven points in New England and the Pacific states. The party's lowest gains were all over five percent. This alone shows that the "Reagan Revolution" was not strictly a Southern phenomena, as is often claimed by journalists. The Democrats lost over ten percent in the South, New England, Mid-Atlantic, Pacific and Southwest states, with losses of over eight points in the Border and Midwest states. Differences in Democratic losses and Republican gains are covered by Independents. That is, if Democrats lose -16.1 percent in the South and Republicans gain14.5, the missing 1.5 percent become Independents. However, our purpose here is to show who switched and, in the case of regions, it is clear that the shift was across the board via regions. Every region became more Republican.

Table 3:Change in ID by Region from 1980 to 1990

Region	Democratic	Republican
South	-16.1 [-12.1, -20.1]	+14.5 [9.5, 19.5]
New England	-12.1 [-3.8, -20.4]	+7.5 [-3.2, 18.2]
Border (KY, MD, MO, WV)	-8.5 [-1.8, 15.2]	+5.1 [-3.5, 13.7]
Mid-Atlantic (NY, NJ, PA, DE)	-11.2 [-7.2, -15.2]	+9.4 [3.7, 15.1]
Midwest (OH, MI, IN, IL, WI, MN)	-8.8 [-5, -12.6]	+9.2 [3.8, 14.6]
Plains (IA, ND, SD, NE, KS)	-3.5 [-11.9, 4.9]	+6.5 [-4.5, 17.5]
Rocky (MT, CO, ID, WY, UT, NV)	-0.6 [-12.6, 11.2]	+5.9 [-5.2, 17]
Pacific (CA, OR, WA)	-11.8 [-7, -16.6]	+7.9 [1.6, 14.2]
Southwest (TX, AZ, NM, OK)	-14.4 [-7.5, -21.3]	+13.6 [6.7, 20.5]

95% CI in brackets

Table 4 shows the change by educational level from none to less than high school through college graduate. In each category, there is a switch to the Republicans, ranging from a plus 5.2 among college graduates to a high of 10.6 for high school graduates. Across each educational level, Democrats lose from a low of 5.1 among college graduates to a high of around 11 percent among high school incompletes and graduates. The analysis of change in identification across age cohorts (Table 4) also shows that across all cohorts, Democrats lose identifiers while Republicans win. Of those born before 1930 who would have known the New Deal best, Democrats lost 8.7 percent while Republicans gained 7.2 percent. Those born

between 1930 and 1944, pre-Baby Boomer, switched away from Democrats at 9.1 percent and to Republicans at 13.6 percent. The 1945 to 1959 cohort switched at a little over 8 percent away from Democrats and about 9 points to Republicans. Those born 1960 or after would have been coming of voting age and voting for the first time in the 1980 to 1990 period, and they went Republican by over 14 percent. These results are the same as for region and education, i.e. the change to Republicans was across the board..

Table 4:Changes in Party ID between 1980 and 1990

Education Level	Change in Dem. ID	Change in Rep. ID
None to Less than High School	-7.6 [-2, -13.2]	+6 [-6.1, 18.1]
High School Incomplete	-11 [-6, -16]	+7.8 [-0.6, 16.2]
High School Graduate	-10.7 [-7.6, -13.8]	+10.6 [6.7, 14.5]
College Incomplete	-7.4 [-3.2, -11.6]	+9.7 [4.9, 14.5]
College Graduate	-5.1 [-0.9, -9.3]	+5.2 [0.9, 9.5]

95% CI in brackets

Table 5:Change in ID in Age Cohorts between 1980 and 1990

Age Cohort	Democratic	Republican
Born before 1930	-8.7 [-5, -12.4]	+7.2 [3.5, 10.9]
Born 1930-1944	-9.1 [-5.7, -12.6]	+13.6 [10.1, 17]
Born 1945-1959	-8.3 [-4.2, -12.5]	+8.8 [4.6, 13]
Born 1960 or After	-11 [-5.1, -16.8]	+14.3 [8.5, 20.2]

95% CI in brackets

The switch from Democrat to Republican in the 1980s was not limited to age cohort, education, and region but carried over to gender and race. Over the 1980 to 1990 period, Democrats were down ten percent among women over the decade, and among women, Republicans were up 8.8 percent. The evidence for race is that Democrats lost 11.2 percent of whites over the decade while Republicans gained 10.9 percent among whites. African Americans fell away from the Democrats over the decade at 13.6 percent but with most moving into the Independent category as Republican identification was up only 3.6 percent.[4] Thus, across numerous demographic data, it is clear that Democrats lost across all groups while Republicans gained across groups but at varying levels of gain.

[4] ANES data show Republican identification among Blacks at 16% in 1988, up from 2 percent in 1982

Turning to ideology and party identification, we used the self-identification question in regard to voters identifying themselves as liberal, moderate or conservative and ran cross tabs by party, showing changes from 1980 to 1986, by which time the change had occurred. Table 5 shows the results. Among self-identified liberals in 1980, 55.5 were Democrats, 29.1 were Independent and 15.4 were Republicans, and there was not much of a switch by 1986. This is commonsensical as there were few events from 1981 to 1986 to make liberals shift to the Republican party. Among self-identified moderates, however, there is major change. Moderates shifted away from the Democratic party by 15 points, going from 55.5 to 40.5. Their movement was mainly toward Independent, as Independent was about a 10 point increase compared to a 5 point jump in Republican identification. The switch among self-described conservatives is impressive. In 1980, 40.9 percent of conservatives were Democrats, while in 1986, that percentage had fallen to 30 percent and conservatives went from 35.1 percent to over 45.9 percent, a gain of over ten points in a short time frame. An analysis of CBS/NYT polls shows the sorting phenomena at work (Wilkins,2014).

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Table 6:Party ID by Ideology in 1980 and 1986

Liberals	1980	1986
Democrat	55.5	53.4
Independent	29.1	30.1
Republican	15.4	16.5
Moderates	**1980**	**1986**
Democrat	55.5	40.5
Independent	26.5	36.3
Republican	18	23.2
Conservatives	**1980**	**1986**
Democrat	40.9	30
Independent	23.9	24.1
Republican	35.1	45.9

The social issues have clearly played a role in the sorting of the parties. Gallup asked abortion questions over the 1980 to 1994 period and in 1980, over 50 percent of those saying abortion should always be illegal were Democrats, and by 1994, that number had fallen to about 23 percent. In 1980, only 27 percent of the always illegal respondents were Republicans, but by 1994, that number was close to 50 percent. Over the 1950 to 1994 time

period, pro-life Democrats migrated to the Republican party while pro-choice Republicans became Independent or Democrats (Brady, 1995 and Greg Adams 1997).

While the shifting of conservatives to the Republican party occurred from 1980 to 1986-90, the national percent of conservatives and the distribution of opinion about abortion did not change. (Fiorina, 2005, 2006 and 2007) There is no post-1980 change in percentage of liberals, moderates and conservatives and in regard to abortion, there is post-1988 a rise in those saying that abortion should always be legal and a decline in those saying abortion should always be illegal. Neither of the charts indicates that the movement to Republican identification is the result of an overall switch to conservatism and, if anything, the abortion issue points in the other direction as the country became a bit more pro-choice, while those identifying as Republicans were moving to the pro-life position.

The evidence points to what others have found, that during the 1980s, self-identified conservative and pro-life responders left the Democratic Party to become Republican. This, in combination with the across-the-board swing by region, education, age gender and so on to the Republican party changed the American electoral system, making Republicans competitive across all national elections: President, House, and Senate.

The switch to Republicans over the decade was across the board by demographics and this, plus the sorting of the parties where moderates and conservatives left the Democratic party and liberals left the Republican party, was the end result of a process which started with Republicans winning presidential elections in spite of sizeable Democratic leads in identification. This process began in the 1950s with Eisenhower's two electoral victories and continued through Nixon's two wins, which were due to the breakdown of the Democratic

party in 1968 and then the nomination of George McGovern in 1972. Each of these elections had special circumstances which allowed Political Scientists, using the Michigan model of party identification, to account for results which deviated from the normal party vote. Reagan's two wins were easily explainable by such factors. In the first election, the misery index was high, and the Iran hostage situation and the failure to rescue them caused the incumbent to lose. In the second, the misery index was down, there were no wars, and the economy was growing: thus, reelection. The 1988 election was harder for the Michigan model to explain. It should have been a reinstating election where the majority party reestablished itself as the dominant party. As we know, by 1988 the party gap had been severely diminished, and Independents were one third of the electorate. In addition to the demographic and ideological changes shown above, a further important change had occurred; namely, the Democratic party had lost their advantage as the party of prosperity from the New Deal until Reagan's second term, by which time 51% of Americans said Republicans were the party more likely to do a better job of keeping the country prosperous, compared to 30% who chose Democrats to do a better job.

Over the decade of the 1980s, the Democratic Party lost its big lead over Republicans as the dominant party. It had lost identifiers across region, by race and gender, and by age. More importantly, the Democrats had been stripped of many of those who said they were conservative and Democrat. What had happened was that the parties had sorted. Liberals were Democrats and conservatives were Republican. This sorting of the electorate by ideology into parties had and has important ramifications for American politics. Before we proceed to deal with this set of issues, the chicken (ideology) or the egg (party identity) question must be further addressed, and thus we turn to this discussion.

For the past 50 years, the concept of party identification has been at the core of political science literature examining the voting decisions of individuals. Studies from Converse (1964) and onward have found that individual level ideology and issue positions were very inconsistent over time, making it unlikely that these attitudes would inform voting decisions for most people. Campbell et al (1960) developed the dominant Michigan Model of party identification, conceiving of it as a stable attachment held by individuals that persisted in the presence of short term political forces and played a strong role in informing voting decisions. A large literature in subsequent years has defended the key findings of the Michigan Model, showing that party identification is stable at the aggregate level (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler, 1998), stable at the individual level (Green and Palmquist, 1990, 1994), and that party identification is strongly related to voting decisions (Bartels, 2000). Although there is disagreement about whether party identification responds to short term forces (MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson, 1989) and disagreement about whether it is simply a "running tally" of an individual's assessment of the performance of the president's party (Fiorina, 1981), there is still agreement in the literature that party identification is very stable in the aggregate, much more so than election results.

The Michigan Model treats ideology and party identification as largely unrelated. But a growing body of literature has found that in the last few decades, the relationship between ideology and party identification has become much stronger (Abramowitz and Saunders, 1998; Layman and Carsey, 2002; Carsey and Layman, 2006; Levendusky, 2009). Sniderman and Stiglitz (2012) argue that as a result of party identification and ideology becoming more sorted (i.e. strongly correlated) in the present period, candidates earn a reputational premium from the identifiers of their party by taking positions consistent with the ideological reputation of their party (i.e. that Democrats are to the left of Republicans). Also, the view that individual level issue positions and ideology are highly unstable has been challenged by newer work that estimates scaled ideology from respondent answers to survey questions on political issues (Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder, 2008; Bafumi and Herron, 2010; Tausanovitch and Warshaw, 2013). These scaled measures of ideology are much more stable across survey panels than answers to individual survey questions and are strong predictors of voting behavior, even after controlling for party identification (Ansolabehere, Rodden and Snyder, 2208). These findings are consistent with the earlier results of Achen (1975): Achen (1975) challenged the conclusions of Converse (1964), arguing that most of the instability in

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s Ansolabehere, Rodden and Snyder (2008) model respondent answers to survey questions as a function of some underlying ideological position and measurement error associated with the question. Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder (2008) show that averaging responses across survey items reduces the measurement error associated with each question and find that individual level ideology estimated this way appears much more stable than suggested in earlier literature, even among respondents with low levels of political information.

responses to survey items was the result of measurement error associated with each survey item.

The growing relationship between ideology and party identification is not inconsistent with the Michigan Model, but it represents a profound shift in the nature of party identification. Because party identification is such a fundamental concept in political science, a large body of literature has sought to understand the causes of this ideological sorting in party identification. Although there is wide agreement that there has been an ideological sorting (Fiorina, Abrams and Pope, 2005), there are strong disagreements about how the sorting process unfolded. In particular, there is strong debate over whether party identification causes changes in ideology (Layman and Carsey, 2002; Levendusky, 2009), ideology causes changes in party identification (Abramowitz and Saunders, 1998), or whether sorting involves some mix of both (Carsey and Layman, 2006; Highton and Kam, 2011). This literature has mostly used ANES panels from the 1980s and 1990s to understand the direction of sorting. But the ANES did not run large multi-year panels during the 1980s and as a result, most studies of individual level sorting have overlooked this period, excepting some such as Highton and Kam (2011), which employed an alternate data source.

Highton and Kam (2011) used panel data from the Political Socialization Survey, which interviewed a panel of respondents in 1973, 1982, and 1997. They found that the direction of the relationship between issue positions and party identification varied across time: from the 1970s to 1980s, sorting tended to involve people updating their issue positions to fit their party identification, but the direction of the relationship was reversed between the 1980s and 1990s. The findings of Highton and Kam (2011) suggest that sorting during the 1980s

was quite different than the sorting that occurred in more widely studied periods. This debate might seem tedious to those outside this area: the literature largely agrees that there has been a transition from Point A to Point B, but is debating whether the path taken was Path X or Path Y. But the direction of sorting is extremely consequential in terms of its implications for theories of party identification.

If sorting came about as the result of party identification changing ideology, that would suggest that party identification remains at the center of understanding American political behavior as in the Michigan Model, an "unmoved mover" which helps us understand everything else. But, if sorting was the result of ideology changing party identification, it suggests that party identification might not be the nearly unshakable foundation explaining all other political behavior. Campbell et al. (1960) noted that it was possible for people to change their party identification to fit their ideology for those who felt strongly about certain issues, but studies at the time indicated that most members of the public lacked a coherent ideology (Converse, 1964). Therefore, a large scale sorting where ideology changed party identification would not be expected under the Michigan Model. Sorting in the 1980s is not only interesting due to the relative scarcity of literature examining sorting in that time: another distinguishing feature of the 1980s was that the changes in party identification in that decade were much larger than those taking place in the 1970s or 1990s.

During the 1980s, the Democrats' long standing advantage in party identification ended and since then, the balance between Democratic and Republican identifiers has been much closer than it was in the past. The changes that took place in national party identification during the 1980s were larger than any changes that have been recorded in the last 60 years. Another

literature has examined the changing party identification during the 1980s, but it has mostly focused on identifying how the changes took place among different demographic groups (Miller, 1991; Miller and Shanks, 1996; Wirls, 1986; Kaufmann and Petrocik, 1999). There has not been as great a focus on how ideological sorting could have led to major shifts in party identification, likely because sorting has been treated as a symmetric process occurring in both parties. Thus, sorting would be expected to change the *correlation* between party identification and ideology, without changing the *distribution* of either party identification or ideology. But an asymmetric sorting could very easily lead to changes in the distribution of either party identification or ideology.

In the next sections, I examine the extent of ideological sorting and discuss how asymmetric sorting led to a large increase in Republican identification.

Ideological Sorting and Changes in Party Identification (Gallup Surveys)

In this section and the following section, I examine ideological sorting from the 1980s to the mid-1980s and 1990s. This section uses some survey data from the Gallup organization, but relies mainly on data from *CBS News/New York Times.* The latter data set is included in the analysis because it asks party identification and ideology questions in a way that is more similar to the ANES questions that have been used in earlier work in this area. Both datasets show that ideology is very stable at the aggregate level, while there are large changes in party identification. Because of the stability of ideology during the 1970s through 1990s, the sorting analysis focuses on examining changes in party identification conditional on ideology.

In terms of understanding how party identification shifted from being only loosely related to ideology to being strong related to ideology, the 1980s stand out as a period of particular interest. The changes in Democratic and Republican identification during the 1980s were larger than in any period in the previous 60 years.

From 1937 through 1983, Democrats on average have had a 14.7 percent identification advantage and since 1984 the Democratic advantage has averaged about 4 percent. From 1985 to the present, neither party has been able to establish an advantage in identification as large as Democrats held before 1980. What rate did ideology play in this major shift?

As stated the Gallup polls did not ask ideology questions very often in the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, I turned to other sources in this section, namely 44 surveys runs by *CBS News/New York Times* (containing almost 69,000 respondents) between 1976 and 1994 (these polls are available starting in 1976) covering questions on ideological and self identification and party identification. The ideology question in *CBS News/New York Times* surveys asked respondents "How would you describe your views on most political matters? Generally, do you think of yourself as liberal, moderate, or conservative?" Respondents had the option of identifying as liberals, moderates, or conservatives. The overall fraction of liberals, moderates, and conservatives does not change much from 1980 to 1994 in the *CBS News/New York Times* surveys and in the following there are controls over individuals on liberal, moderate and conservative.

The *CBS News/New York Times* data (Table 7) shows that Republican gains during the first half of the 1980s were consistent across ideological groups, but showed signs of sorting in later years, with Democrats losing further with conservatives but gaining back some liberals.

From 1980 to 86 liberals , moderates and conservatives leave the Democratic party but Republican gains are not 1to 1as many become Independents. By 1988 liberal losses are not high but moderate and conservative Democrats have moved Republican at 6.8 and 9.4 percent. With the end of the series in 1994 sorting has occurred only 1.7 percent of 1976 liberals are now Republicans and only 4.8 percent of moderates are now Republican. In regard to conservatives 14 percent had left the Democrats and over 9 are Republican -an over category gain of about 10 percent. Both *CBS News/New York Times* and Gallup surveys (not shown) showed that Democrats had a narrow advantage with conservatives in the late 1970s, but by 1986, Republicans had gained an identification advantage over Democrats among conservatives. Both sets of polls also showed that the sorting taking place was highly asymmetric: there were no signs of Democratic gains among liberals, but there were strong Republican gains among conservatives.

Generational turnover and southern realignment are far more prominent explanations for large scale changes in party identification than ideological sorting. Although questions have been raised about the empirical support for particular theories of how socialization of new generations leads to changes in overall macropartisanship, the Clubb, Flanigan, and Zingale (1986) critique of Beck (1974), the theory that major changes in macropartisanship primarily come from generational turnover rather than conversion of existing voters is still widely accepted. Black and Black (2002) discuss secular realignment in the South, particularly how Republicans made substantial gains among southerners during the Reagan presidency that greatly improved their national performance in elections.

Table 7 : CBS/NYT Changes in Party Identification by Ideology

	1980—1986 Democrats	1980—1986 Republicans
Liberals	-8.9 [-5.3, -12.4]	5.4 [1.9, 8.9]
Moderates	-7.1 [-4.8, -9.5]	5.7 [3.4, 8.1]
Conservatives	-9.2 [-6.5, -11.9]	5.5 [2.8, 8.2]
	1980—1988 Democrats	**1980—1988 Republicans**
Liberals	-2.8 [1.2, -6.7]	3.5 [-0.4, 7.5]
Moderates	-8.2 [-5.7, -10.8]	6.8 [4.3, 9.4]
Conservatives	-9.6 [-6.7, -12.6]	9.4 [6.4, 12.4]
Diff-in-Diff: Conservatives vs Liberals	-6.9 [-1.9, -11.9]	5.9 [0.9, 10.8]
	1980—1994 Democrats	**1980—1994 Republicans**
Liberals	-3.1 [-7.2, 1.1]	1.7 [-2.5, 5.8]
Moderates	-6.7 [-3.9, -9.5]	4.8 [2, 7.6]
Conservatives	-14 [-10.8, -17.2]	9.1 [5.9, 12.3]
Diff-in-Diff: Conservatives vs Liberals	-10.9 [-5.7, -16.2]	7.4 [2.2, 12.7]

If the previous analyses of changes in party identification conditional on ideology (using Gallup and *CBS News/New York Times* data) are restricted to the non-South, the results are virtually identical. Self-identified conservatives in the South and non-South moved out of the

Democratic Party and into the Republican Party.[6] The asymmetric sorting of conservatives into the Republican Party cannot simply be explained as the result of either generational turnover or a secular shift in the South.

By the end of the 1980s, liberals *remained* much more likely to identify as Democrats, and conservatives *became* much more likely to identify as Republicans. As a result of this sorting, party identification and ideology have become much more strongly correlated than they were in the past. The major consequence of this asymmetry in sorting was a large increase in Republican identification that ended the Democrats' long standing advantage in party identification. This new relationship between ideology and party identification is quite important: as Sniderman and Stiglitz (2012) demonstrate, candidates for office receive a reputational premium from party identifiers when they take their party's expected positions on the left-right ideological spectrum.

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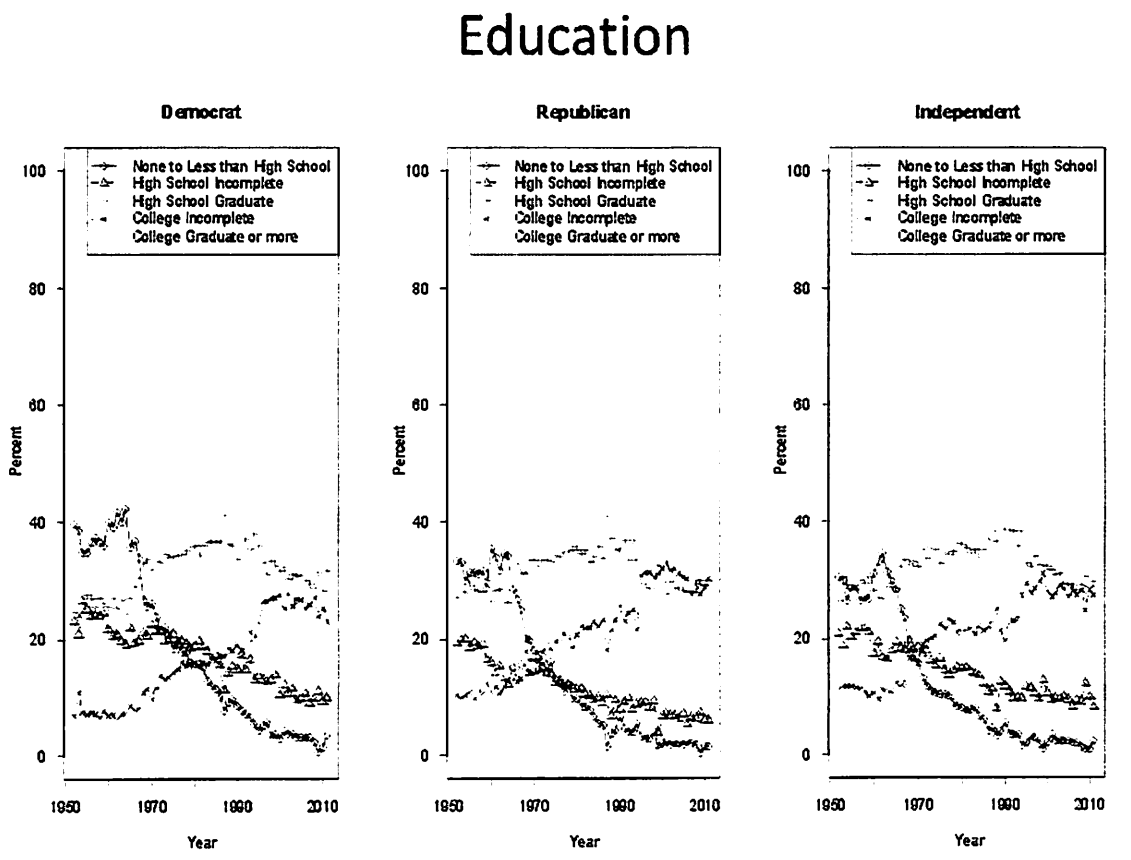
6 See Arjun Wilkins, who restricted this analysis to non-Southerners and people born before 1960 and he finds results identical to those reported herein.

The shifts in party identification in the 1980's brought about a more competitive party system with Republicans closer to Democrats and Independents to new highs. What have the subsequent-post 1990- 26 years brought about in terms of change? In regard to election results it is a different world. In 1992 the Democrats held the presidency, the House and the Senate; however, over the next 24 years Republicans held the House for 20 years and the Senate for 14 years. In the 22 years prior to 1992 the Democrats controlled the house for all 22 years and the Senate for 16 years. In the prior 22 years The Democrats controlled both the House and the Senate all 22 years. Thus, in the 44 years preceding 1994 Democrats owned the House of Representatives and had a lock on the Senate. It seems clear that at the congressional level the 1980's shift was indeed a turning point. Post 1992 the presidency is a different story with Democrats Clinton and Obama winning two terms with George W. Bush sandwiched in between (with a single plurality win). Over the 1980 through 1988 period the winning candidate received over 50 percent of the vote and none won by less than 7 percent. In the post 1990 period the highest margin of victory was President Obama's 7-point win in 2008 and in three of the six elections the winner did not get a majority. Thus, post 1990 Democrats do better but the elections are much more competitive. However, have the demographics that were in place in 1990 changed over the past quarter century? We begin by looking at education, race, gender and region by party identification to ascertain change in party over time. Figures 5 through 8 show the results

Looking at education over the entire period the number of high school graduates is up, while none to less than high school is down and that this is true across all three

party classifications. There are no appreciable differences in educational attainments across the three political categories although as the 2016 election shows there is variation in voting by educational attainment.

Figure 5 Change is Education by party id 1950-2015



When we run the same analysis by race, we find an almost straight linear drop in the number of whites identifying as Democrat and a similar rise in the number Black, Hispanic and others identifying as Democrat. Thus, in 1950 about 90 percent of Democrats were white while by 2012, that number is at 60 percent, and the number of Blacks and other races has risen from 10 to 40 percent of the party. Republicans

begin the period with a similarly high percentage of whites, which drops in the 1952 through 1956 period as Eisenhower won a majority of Black voter in those elections. However, after Eisenhower, the Republican party has changed very little from 1950 to today, in spite of the demographic changes where whites as a proportion of population have declined. Independents are somewhere between Democrats and Republicans, being less white than Republicans but less non-white than Democrats. Gender differences began to show in the 1980s and have since exacerbated such that today about 60 percent of Democratic identifiers are women, whereas for Republicans, the numbers are about 50/50. This party pattern fits the voting data quite well. In 1976, men and women voted 52 to 48 percent for Carter, while in all subsequent elections, women vote more Democratic than men. Ronald Reagan, in both elections, and Herbert Walker Bush captured a majority of women's votes but women voted Democrat more than men did. From Bill Clinton on, a majority of women voted Democratic for President and are increasingly more Democratic than men. Independents are again between Democrats and Republicans, with more men claiming Independent status than women.

Figure 6. change in racial composition of parties 1950-2012

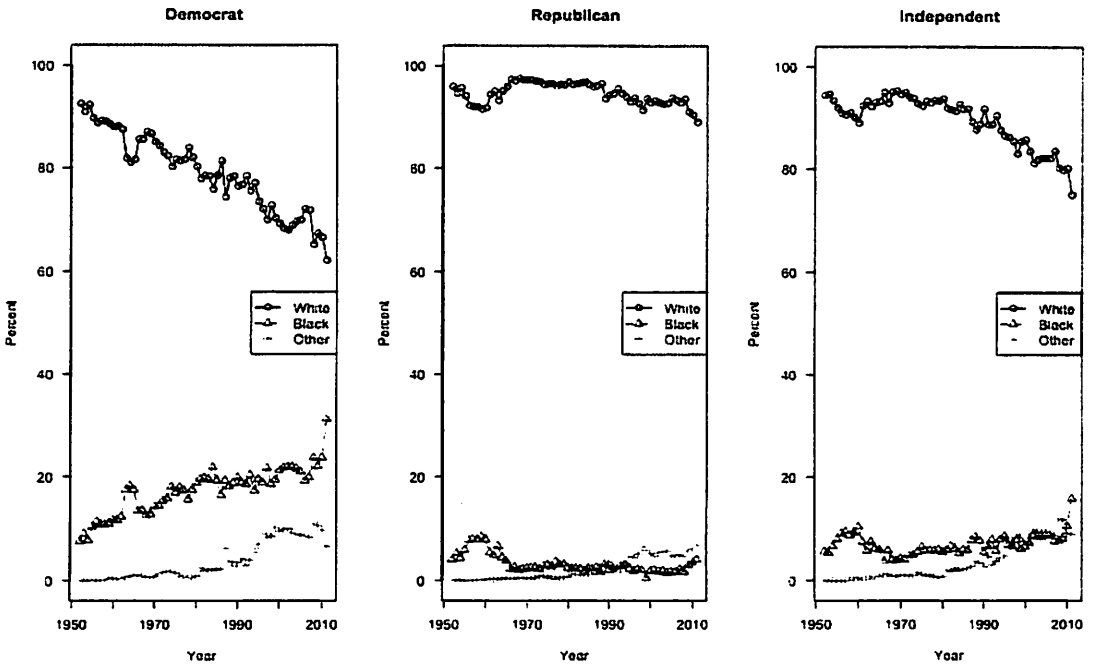
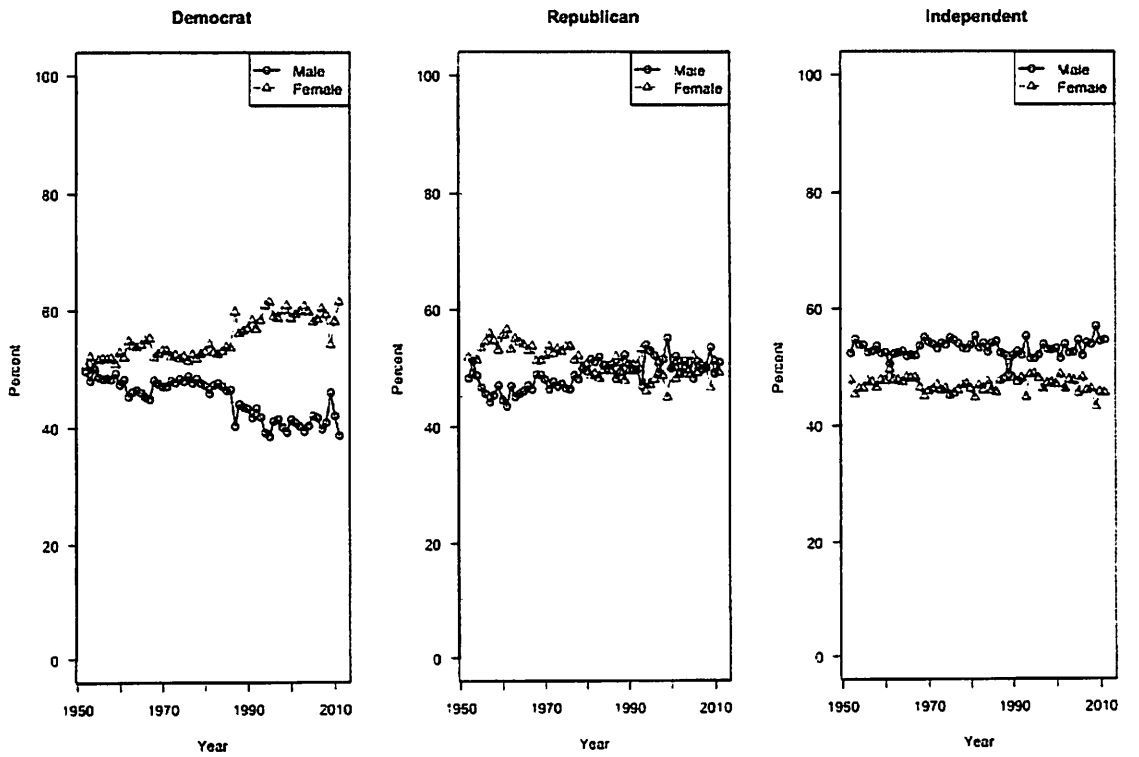
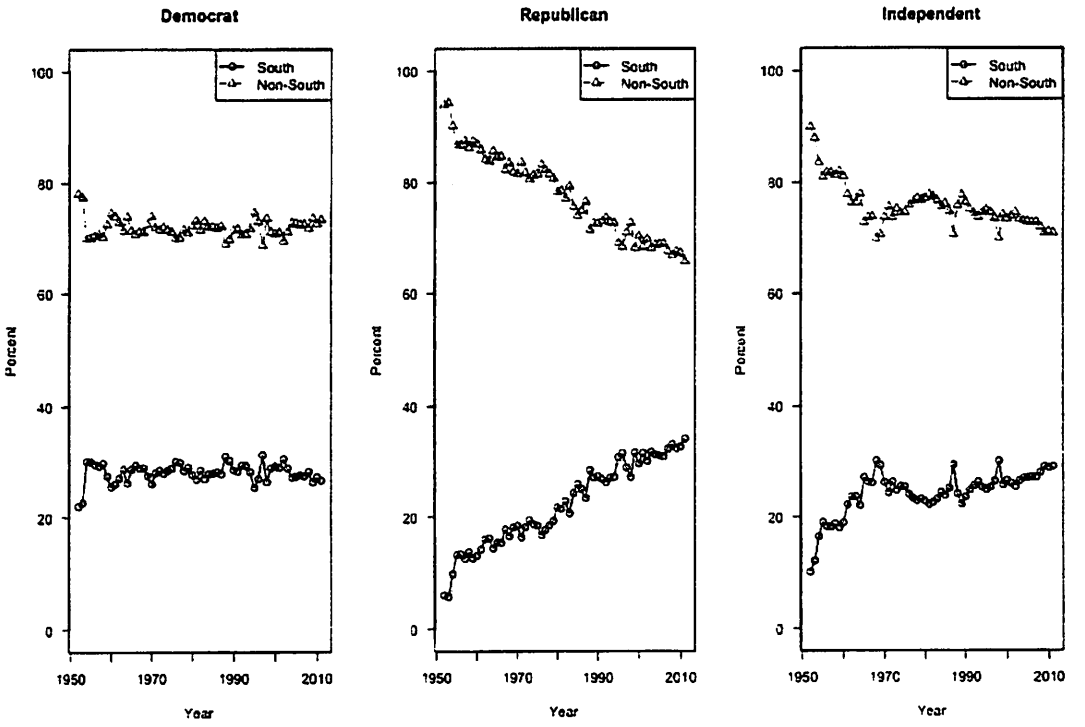


Figure 7: Change in gender composition of parties, 1950-2012



The regional shifts that occurred in the 1980s continue for the Republicans. Over the entire time period, the Republicans become more Southern, while Democratic ratios of non-Southern to Southern identifiers stay about the same. In this case, Independents look more like the Republicans in that the number of non-Southern Independents has fallen while the number of Southern Independents has risen.

Figure 8 Change in regional composition of Parties, 1950-2012



Looking at the same set of variables comparing party leaners to party members on the root question shows that for Democrats (Figures not shown), leaning Democrats have fewer minorities and a higher percentage of whites than is the case for the straight Democrat response. The same result is true for gender, as the leaners are about even-steven in men and women compared to the 60-40 difference among regular Democrats. Leaning Democrats are a little less Northern and more Southern than their Democratic counterparts, though the differences post-1994 are very slight. Republican leaners are less white, more male and slightly less Southern than their Republican counterparts.

Party identification in the post-1990 era began with Democrats having a 36.3 to 33.4 lead over Republicans, with 30.3 percent Independents. Republicans had a .4 advantage in the yearly (1991) average, but with the recession, the Democrats went into the 1992 election with a 6 point lead, 36.9 to 30.7. Over the Clinton years, the good economy plus no foreign interventions leading to war gave the Democrats leads of as high as 8 percent (1996) and a low of 4.2 in 1994 and 1995. The Clinton sexcapades did not much affect the Democrats' identification levels. Thus, they maintained a lead of some size given the new system. By 1992, Republicans were at the bottom of the pile, falling below those claiming Independent on the root question, and they remained there save for one year, until 2001, when Republicans came within one percent of Democrats, with Independents at 32 percent.

The years from 2001 through 2004 are the best years for Republicans in the time series as our yearly average has them leading Democrats by a little in each year, with 2003 showing the largest lead at less than two percent. Gallup, using their measure, shows these years as about even, with Republicans up very slightly from 2002 through 2004. The Pew time series on party shows Democrats up during these years but twice by one percent or less and, like our charts, shows these years as recent high points for Republicans. The major cause of the Republican rise was 9/11 and the fact that, as Petrocik and others have argued, the Republicans, until about 2005, owned the foreign policy and defense issue areas. However, the war in Iraq dragged, and by 2006 all polls were showing the Democrats increasing their lead over Republicans. Our data show the Democrats with about a .4 lead in 2006, increasing to over 8 points by the time of the 2008 elections. In 2009, the Democrats went from 37 to 37.4 identification, and Republicans were now below 29 percent.

The claim by Carville, Judis and others that Democrats would rule the next generation abounded, but the growing unpopularity of the President's health care and the tough, slow economic recovery generated discontent, which is especially hard when the expectations had been so high. By 2010, Democrats were under 34 percent and by 2012 were at 32.9 percent, while Republicans were over 29 to cut the gap to less than four percent. Recent events, including the government shutdown, have driven Republican numbers to 25 percent, but Democrats have fared only a little better, falling to 31 percent, making Independents the plurality

choice by almost ten percent. Since December of 2012, Independents fell to 36 percent once in March of 2013 and have been over 40 percent in every poll from June of 2013 to the present. The average for Polltracker shows Independents at 40.9, Democrats at 32.9, and Republicans at 25.4. In short, most of the post-1990 system has had Democrats leading Republicans. With the end of the Bush I presidency through the Clinton presidency, Democrats averaged about a five point advantage. In the next decade, with George W. Bush doing well through 2004 and then badly, the Republicans kept the numbers close, but from 2006 to today, the Democrats have averaged a 4.5 advantage. However, over this time period, both parties have lost pace, and those claiming Independence are at or above 40 percent.

Thus, the time series began with the Democrats having an adjusted post-1936 New Deal lead of about 10 points, then widening in the late 1950s to over fifteen and, by the mid-1960s, their lead in identification was over 25 percent and even with the Viet Nam war, the Democratic convention in 1968 and the rending apart of the Democrats, they still retained a 15 plus point lead in the late 1960s, and in 1972, the year of the Nixon landslide, Democrats led Republicans 43.6 to 25.3. That lead widened in the aftermath of Watergate as Republican identification fell below 25 points and Democrats inched higher toward fifty (never attaining it). Even with high inflation, the Iran hostages and unemployment close to eight percent, Democrats held a 22 point edge in identification. These leads in party identification mean that Democratic presidential candidates could essentially win without much help from Independents, leaners or not leaning.

In the 1976 elections, Democrats held a 24 point lead in identification, so in order for a Republican candidate to tie the Democrat, they would have to capture 27 of the 30 percentthat Independents were. That means that in order for a Republican to tie, he would have to win 90 percent of the Independent vote and, as Ford won that vote but by only a 52 to 48 margin. The actual election was close because, in addition to not carrying Independents, Carter only carried 80 percent of his party identifiers, while Ford carried 89 percent of the Republicans. The 1980 results show Republicans at a disadvantage on identification close to the 1976 figures. In the actual election, Reagan took .64 of the Independents and carried 85 percent of Republicans, while Carter only carried two thirds of his own party. In 1984, the Republicans need only carry 66 percent of Independents to make up for Democratic identification advantage. However, as in 1976 and 1980, the Democratic presidential candidate only held about three fourths of his party's voters, while Reagan got 93 percent of his party's identifiers; thus, a landslide

With the exception of the two Clinton elections where Ross Perot also competed, the Democratic candidates don't hold as many of their party as do Republicans, which could be the result of their being the plurality party: more votes, more variety, more to lose. The Clinton years elections had him holding a slightly higher percent of his party than either Bush or Dole, with the margin being only four points in each case. Prior to Clinton, in the previous three elections, the Democrats' best number was 80 percent, while the lowest Republican number was 85 in 1980, with the Republican congressman John Anderson running as an Independent. After 1992, the gap between the parties in re their own identifiers drops considerably, and in 2012 it was (.92 to .93), for all practical purposes, even.

Since the Reagan presidency and the decline in Democratic advantage, Republican candidates don't have to totally dominate among Independents. In the Republican victories in 1988, 2000 and 2004, they need to win only .61, .59, and .50 of Independents to tie the election and, in all three elections, they either won or split the Independent vote, as determined by the exit polls. Moreover, in each of those elections, they held 90 plus percent of their party while the Democratic candidates were at .83, .87 and .89, respectively. In their losses in 1992, 1996, 2008 and 2012, three times they lost the Independent vote, twice to Clinton and once to Obama in 2008, winning .52 percent in 2012, enough to make the election closer than that of 2008 but not enough to win. In short, post-1984, the electoral system is more competitive and Independents, however considered, leaners or non-leaners, are more determinative of results.

The question of Independents leaning to one party or the other, being partisans, is still out there in the profession and must be dealt with. As we have said before, whether or not leaners are "partisan" is not crucial for our study. All we have to show is that leaners are more likely to split tickets and vote for the party they are not leaning to than are strong Democrats and strong Republicans. The category of leaners, as Fiorina and Abrams have shown, contains those who are Independent but are intending to vote, say, for Obama in 2008.

The rising number of respondents answering the core Gallup question by saying they were Independent does not, according to the literature on party identification, mean Independents as respondents are not partisan. Moreover, such leaners are often more partisan in their voting behavior than the National Election Studies' weak party identifiers (Abramowitz, 2011; Petrocik, 2009). Gallup does not ask the weak identifier question, but in the 1950s they did begin to ask respondents who identified themselves as Independent whether they leaned toward one party or not. Thus, we have a Gallup first question similar to the ANES first question and a similar third question determining whether or not Independents were leaners. In the following section, we use the 5 point scale to predict vote choice in House elections. House elections are the national election which is most partisan given that, relatively speaking, voters know less about candidates and issues, and incumbency has the greatest effect. In short, it is House elections where we would expect Independents leaning toward a party to more closely follow the party line.

How do leaners behave relative to Democrats and Republicans in regard to House voting behavior (Table 8)? Since the leaning question is not asked by Gallup until the late 1940s, the number in the analysis declines but is still over 60,000. The results show that Republicans are more likely to vote Republican in House elections than are respondents leaning Republican. Democrats and Democratic leaners follow the same pattern. All variables in the equation are significant, and the pseudo R squared is 0.62. The regression estimates that a randomly selected Independent would have a 54.8 percent chance of voting Democratic. A randomly selected Democrat would have a 94.5 percent probability of voting Democratic,

while an Independent who leaned Democratic would have an 87.4 probability of voting Democratic. A randomly selected Republican would have a 5.5 percent chance of voting Democratic, while an Independent who leaned Republican would have a 17.8 percent chance of voting Democratic.

Table 8: Regression of Vote for a Democratic House Candidate on Individual Party Identification with Leaners (Probit): 1950 - 2012

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Z-value	Sig
(Intercept)	0.122	0.0268	4.56	***
Democrat	1.478	0.0293	50.47	***
Lean Democrat	1.023	0.0350	29.24	***
Lean Republican	-1.045	0.0337	-31.02	***
Republican	-1.717	0.0301	-57.01	***

N: 64,627

Pseudo R"2: 0.617

Table 9a: Regression of Vote for a Democratic House Candidate on Individual Party Identification (Probit): 1952—2012

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Z-value	Sig	Prob
(Intercept)	0.0486	0.0278	1.75		.519
Strong Democrat	1.2535	0.0349	35.93	***	.895
Weak Democrat	0.7290	0.0337	21.65	***	.767
Lean Democrat	0.6435	0.0372	17.29	***	.740
Lean Republican	-0.67031	0.0372	-18.00	***	.251
Weak Republican	-0.77172	0.0351	-22.00	***	.22014
Strong Republican	-1.30886	0.0375	-34.90	***	.095

N: 28,809
Pesudo R^2: .68

Table 9b: Regression of Vote for a Democratic Presidential Candidate on Individual Party Identification (Probit): 1952—2012

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Z-value	Sig	Prob
(Intercept)	-0.29159	0.03004	-9.708	***	.385
Strong Democrat	1.69838	0.03932	43.190	***	.955
Weak Democrat	0.85645	0.03630	23.592	***	.804
Lean Democrat	1.01518	0.04082	24.870	***	.845
Lean Republican	-0.86937	0.04479	-19.412	***	.192
Weak Republican	-0.79802	0.04111	-19.414	***	.212
Strong Republican	-1.58899	0.05262	-30.200	***	.056

N: 22,551
Pesudo R^2: .58

Table 10a: Regression of Vote for a Democratic House Candidate on Individual Party Identification (Probit): 1952—1982

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Z-value	Sig	Prob
(Intercept)	-0.08477	0.03096	-2.738	**	.466
Strong Democrat	1.20771	0.03828	31.550	***	.886
Weak Democrat	0.77700	0.03736	14.472	***	.781
Lean Democrat	0.60021	0.04147	14.434	***	.726
Lean Republican	-0.53910	0.04249	-12.688	***	.295
Weak Republican	-0.68110	0.03962	-17.191	***	.248
Strong Republican	-1.18844	0.04298	-27.654	***	.117

N: 21,765
Pesudo R^2: .29

Table 10b: Regression of Vote for a Democratic Presidential Candidate on Individual Party Identification (Probit): 1952—1982

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Z-value	Sig	Prob
(Intercept)	-0.60441	0.03407	-17.74	***	.273
Strong Democrat	1.62089	0.04306	37.64	***	.947
Weak Democrat	0.90762	0.04073	22.28	***	.818
Lean Democrat	0.91908	0.04576	20.08	***	.821
Lean Republican	-0.66506	0.05362	-12.40	***	.253
Weak Republican	-0.51993	0.04740	-10.97	***	.302
Strong Republican	-1.31561	0.06454	-20.38	***	.094

N: 16,113
Pesudo R^2: .35

Table 10c: Regression of Vote for a Democratic House Candidate on Individual Party Identification (Probit): 1984—2012

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Z-value	Sig	Prob
(Intercept)	-0.21709	0.03404	-6.377	***	.414
Strong Democrat	1.08589	0.04090	26.550	***	.861
Weak Democrat	0.69718	0.04094	17.031	***	.757
Lean Democrat	0.63219	0.04501	14.045	***	.736
Lean Republican	-0.46197	0.04732	-9.762	***	.322
Weak Republican	-0.56230	0.04437	-12.674	***	.287
Strong Republican	-1.12344	0.04900	-22.927	***	.131

N: 17,304
Pesudo R^2: .24

Table 10d: Regression of Vote for a Democratic Presidential Candidate on Individual Party Identification (Probit): 1984—2012

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Z-value	Sig	Prob
(Intercept)	-0.82178	0.03582	-22.939	***	.206
Strong Democrat	1.60086	0.04415	36.257	***	.945
Weak Democrat	0.84878	0.04309	19.696	***	.802
Lean Democrat	0.93596	0.04740	19.748	***	.825
Lean Republican	-0.51259	0.05942	-8.627	***	.304
Weak Republican	-0.44985	0.05403	-8.326	***	.326
Strong Republican	-1.10976	0.07423	-14.949	***	.134

N: 13,651
Pesudo R^2: .30

The data for the ANES survey is continuous since 1952, and Table 9 shows the ANES 7 point party ID scale regressed against first House vote and then presidential vote with probability attached. The data for House races shows a linear progression with strong Democrats most likely to vote Democratic in House elections, followed by weak. then leaners, with strong Republicans least likely to vote Democrat. The differences among strong and less strong Democrats is about 15 points and roughly the same for Republicans, strong and less strong. In short, leaners may be closet partisans, but it's a different closet than that of strong partisans.

The results for presidential voting differ slightly in that both leaning Democrats and Republicans are more loyal presidential voters than are weak partisans. Nevertheless, there are gaps of over 10 points for leaning Democrats and over 13 points for leaning Republicans. In sum, leaners are less reliable than strong partisans and, given the closeness between parties, their votes matter more. It should be added that the number of pure Independents in the ANES polls was over 10 percent in both 2008 and 2012.

Given the sorting in the 1980s and the subsequent sorting and polarization post 1984 it would seem that post 84 partisan voting would be different than pre 1984 voting; thus, we ran a probit dividing the electorate pre and post 1984. Table 10 a through d shows the results for both presidential and House voting. The analysis is as expected: pre 1984 twelve percent of strong Democrats vote House Republican while 12 percent of strong Republicans vote Democrat at the House level and weak and leaning identifiers of both parties vote their party in House elections less than do strong partisans-28 percent of leaning Democrats and almost 30 percent of leaning Republicans vote against their party elections. Presidential

voting pre 1984 shows partisans holding to their party at a higher level than they do in House elections; however, weak and leaning partisans still vote their party less often in presidential elections.

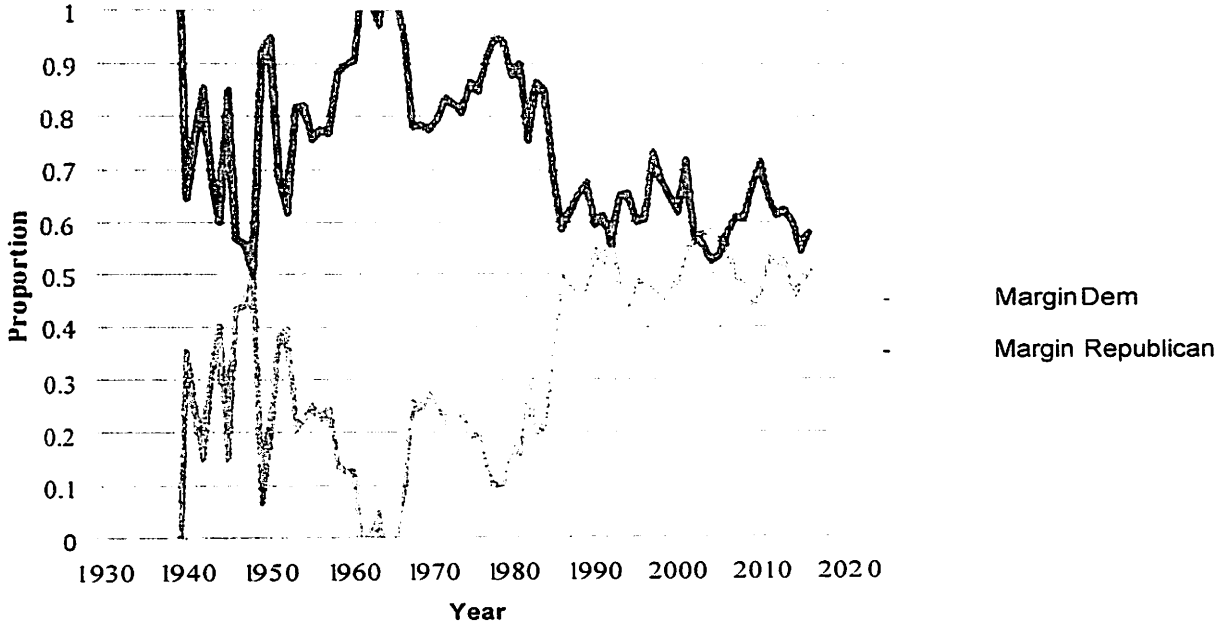
The post 1984 analyses shows that strong partisan behavior does not change dramatically but the behavior of less partisan identifiers shows some tightening with weak and leaning Democrats voting more often for their parties' House candidate and leaner Democrats become a little more partisan at the presidential level. However, Republicans at weaker levels do not show any greater alignment to their party than they did pre 84vand on both House and Presidential voting their numbers are a little less loyal post 1984. It is important to note that in both regimes pre and post that weaker partisans are not as loyal to party candidates as are strong partisans.

How many Leaners?

It is clear that leaners (and weak partisans) vote differently than do partisans; thus, what remains is to show how the Independent vote has come to matter more in elections post-Reagan. Figure 9 shows the proportion of Independents needed to win the presidency from 1940 to 2016, assuming that all Democrats and Republicans vote their party. The results show a Democratic advantage from 1940 to 1948, where there is a coming together or a diminished difference between the parties in identification. Then from 1950 onward, Democrats need few if any Independents to win. From 1960 through 1966, Democrats average 49 percent identification, and in 1964 they were at 51.6, thus needing no Independents to win. Then in the 1980s, as the identification gap closed, Republicans could

win with a reasonable number of Independents, and Democrats had to have some Independents to win.

Figure 9: Proportion of Independents needed by party to win presidential elections if voting 100 percent partisan



We know that the 100 percent partisanship assumption in the previous figure is not correct, especially earlier, when Democrats had large leads in identification and lost presidential elections because many Democrats vacated their party in presidential elections. I calculated a normal vote for the time series by looking at how Democrats and Republicans voted, which is loyalty times turnout across the 7 point scale, and Figure 10 shows the importance of Independent voting, given a normal vote. The gaps in this Figure are not as large as in the

previous Figure because party loyalty is not 100 percent as in 1964 for Republicans and 1972 for Democrats; however, the pattern is the same. Beginning in the 1980s, Republicans have a higher normal vote and Democrats are lower than they were in the 50s, 0s and 70s. In short, there are an increasing number of Independents and a decreased number of partisans, which means Independent leaners are more significant than they used to be. Democrats still need fewer than do Republicans, but the system is competitive. When you add weak partisans to the story, the percentage of floating voters is higher, not lower.

Figure 10:Normal Vote analysis

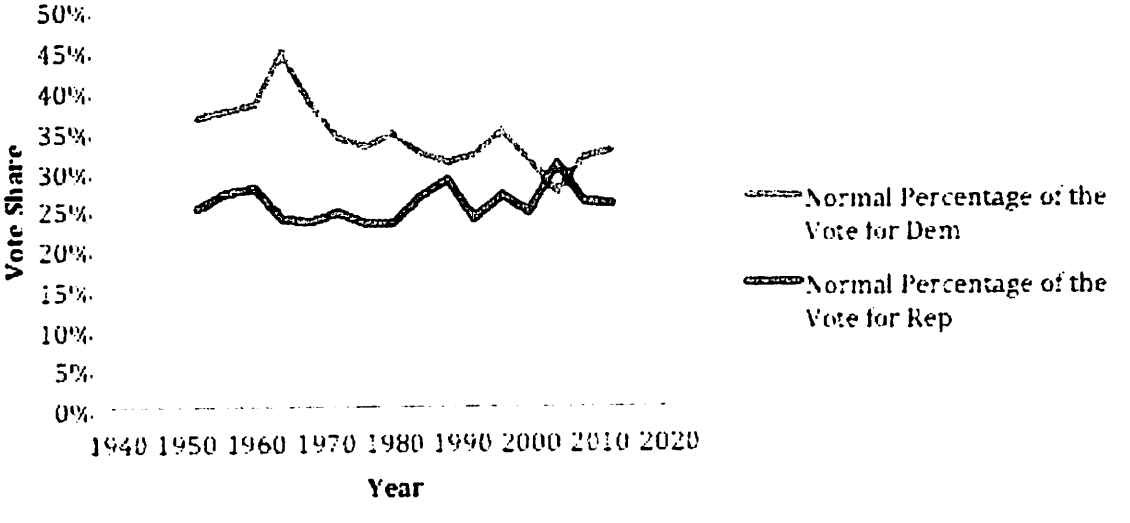


Figure 1: The "Normal Vote" displayed in this graph is the percentage of the overall available vote share (100%) composed of partisans voting for their own candidate. That is the 39% Normal Vote for the Democrats in 1972 means that Democrats could rely on receiving 39% of all available votes in a presidential election simply from people who already identified as Democrats turning out and voting Democrat.

Conclusions

The secular realignment of American politics generated a sorted purer party system with a large number of Independents. The pure parties are more like European parties but in a two party system as opposed to a multiple-party system many voters are left unrepresented. Thus the rise in Independents.

Contrary to the received wisdom, leaning Democrats and Republicans are not closet partisans (nor are weak partisans), rather they are more likely to vote the other party as to lean one way in 2008 and another in 2010. When they are combined with pure Independents they decide elections because they party gap is so close.

One result of this is that party elites interpret their victories ass mandates and push policies that result in being rejected at the next election. Clinton 1992, the Republican Contract With American in 1994, Bush in 2004 (his first term began by working with Democrats on education), trying to privatize social security, and Obama in 2008 were all met with rejection in the next election.

The election of Donald Trump in 2016 seems to fit this pattern. Exit polls show Democrats with a 37 to 33 percent lead and 89 percent of Democrats voted Clinton with 9 percent voting Trump (white and not strong Democrats) while 90 percent of Republicans voted Trump with 7 percent for Clinton making the party gap even closer than 37 to 33. Independents voted Trump 48 to 42, thus turning the small Democratic lead into basically a 50/50 election. Voters, especially Independents were unpleased with the parties' choice of candidates, which showed that over 70% of independents were dissatisfied with the candidates.

In sum, the new party system has given us purer, more competitive political parties with fewer identifiers and a riser number of independents who increasingly determine election results, and those results correct Democrats that are too far left and Republicans that are too far right.

CHAPT.3

TABLE 1:PARTY IDENTIFICATION IN GALLUP SURVEYS 1937-2015

YEAR	DEMOCRAT	INDEPENDENT	REPUBLICAN
1937	48	19.5	32.4
1938	51.7	0	48.3
1939	51.1	7	41.9
1940	43.1	19.6	37.3
1942	47.4	17.3	35.2
1943	43.5	20.8	35.7
1944	42.3	19.3	38.4
1945	47.5	16.7	35.8
1946	40.1	23	36.9
1947	39.9	[illegible]	37.1
1948	37.7	25	37.3
1949	48.8	18.3	[illegible]
1950	46.2	19.5	31.5
1951	39.7	27.3	31.2
1952	39.8	25.9	33.9
1953	45.5	22	32
1954	45	22.2	31.8
1955	44.2	23.3	32.3
1956	45.5	20	34.5
1957	44.8	21.3	33.6
1958	46.9	22.3	30.3
1959	47.1	23	29.3
1960	47.2	22.9	29.2
1961	51	20.4	28.2
1962	49.9	22.2	27.2
1963	48.9	23.8	26.8
1964	51.6	22.6	25.4
1965	50.4	23.7	25.4
1966	47.4	25.1	26.4
1967	42.8	28.3	27.9
1968	43.1	28.6	27.5
1969	42.1	29	27.5
1970	43.2	28	27.8
1971	43.6	29.3	25.5
1972	42.9	30.5	24.9
1973	42.6	32	24.1
1974	43.9	31.9	22.4
1975	43.6	33.4	21.7

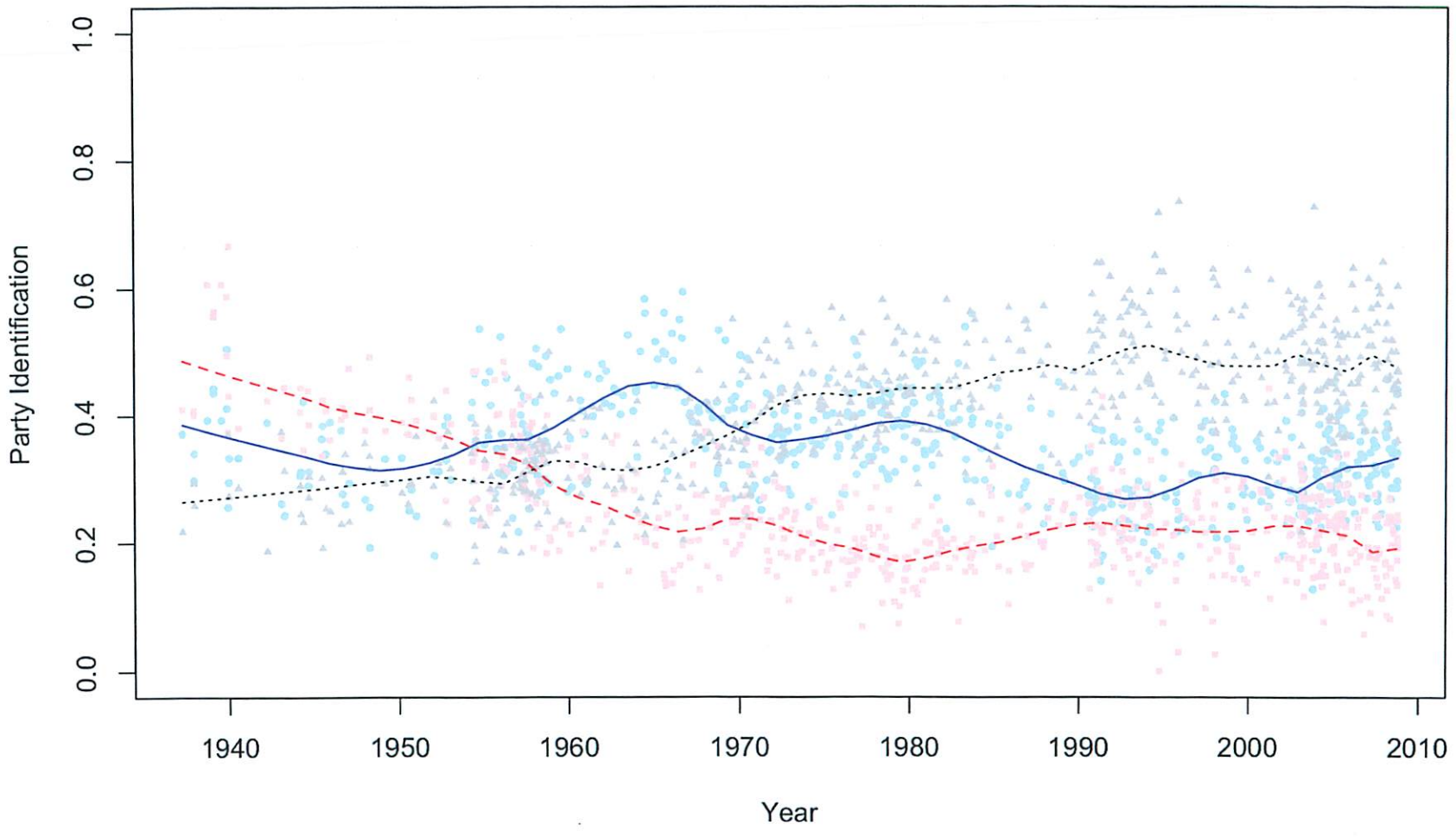
1976	46.2	30.3	22.3
1977	47.1	30.6	20.9
1978	47.1	28.8	22.8
1979	44.4	32.7	21.3
1980	45.3	29.3	23.6
1981	41.4	30.3	27.1
1982	44.4	28.2	**25.6**
1983	43.6	30	24.5
1984	39.5	28.8	30.1
1985	35	30.4	32.1
1986	35.6	30.3	31.2
1987	35.9	31.3	29.5
1988	36	29.7	29.9
1989	33.8	29.7	32.3
1990	34.8	29.1	32.1
1991	32.2	31.1	32.5
1992	35.5	31.2	29.6
1993	35.2	33.5	28
1994	33.5	34.2	29.4
1995	33.5	33.9	29.4
1996	36.9	28.1	29.4
1997	35.8	31.6	28.5
1998	34.2	33.4	28.3
1999	33.1	34.9	28.3
2000	33.9	29.5	28.8
2001	32.8	30.7	32.2
2002	32.3	30.8	32.7
2003	30.8	33	32.6
2004	33.4	29.4	34.2
2005	33.1	30.4	32.4
2006	34.9	30.9	31.1
2007	32.4	36.8	27.6
2008	35.7	32.9	27.9
2009	35.2	31.8	27.2
2010	31.7	34.5	27.7
2011	30.3	38	26.7
2012	31.1	36	27.5
2013	31.4	41.5	25.1
2014	29.6	42.5	25.8
2015	29.3	43	26.1
2016	32	40.	27

Appendix A

(Is taken from a longer work so the Figures begin with 4)

We begin the regional analysis of secular realignment in the region Key focused on in his two seminal election papers, New England. The New England states were, in the mid to late New Deal era, a bastion of Republican strength (figure 4). Over the twenty some years from 1937 to 1958, Republicans held an advantage among identifiers and, on average, held about a two to one advantage in House seats. Even though Republicans were dominant during this period, their numbers were falling as Democratic identifiers increased. In the late 50s, Democratic identifiers exceeded Republicans, and in the following 50 years have continued to be more numerous than Republicans. During the 1960s to mid 1980s, Democrats held

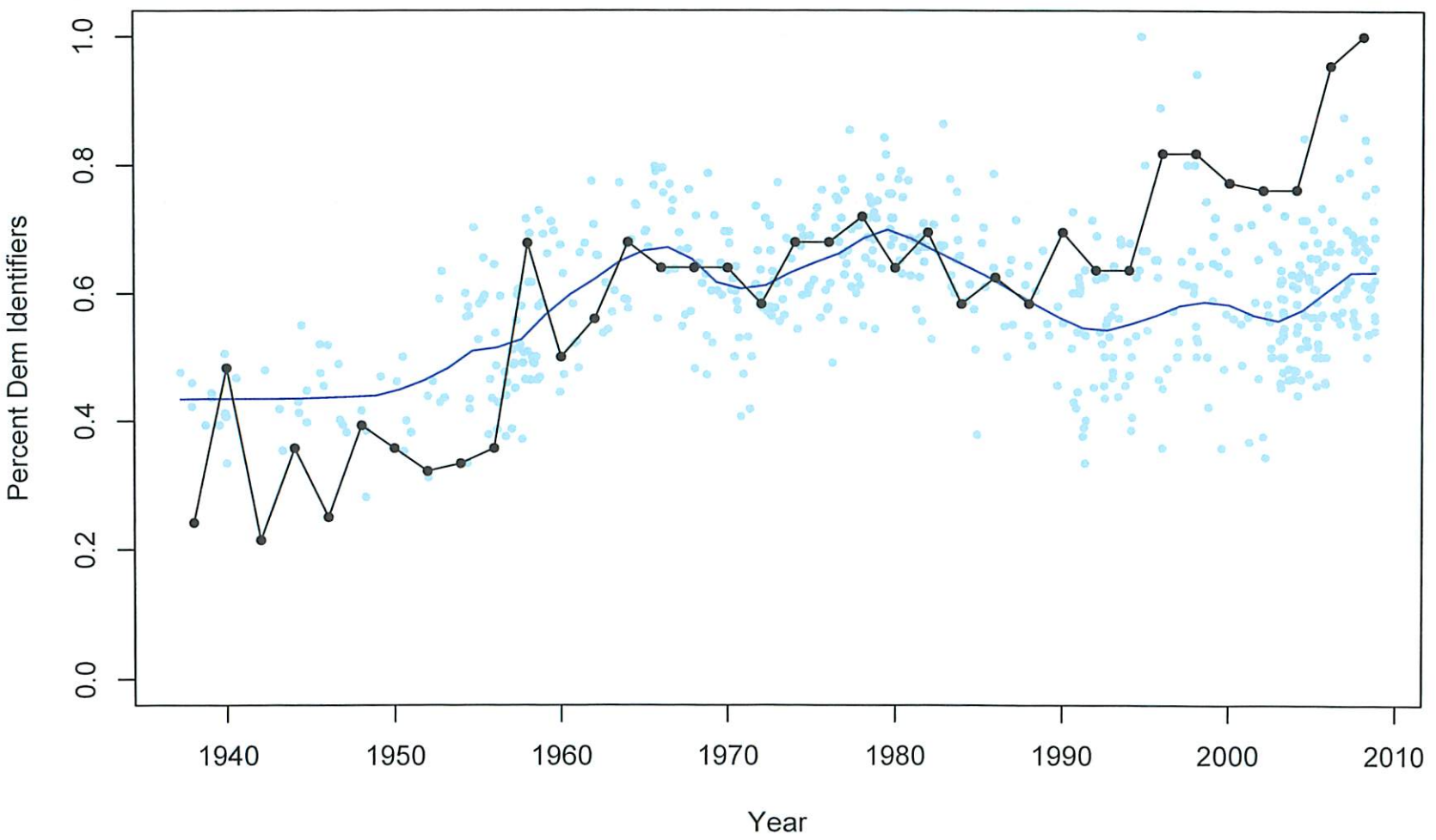
Figure 4: Party Identification in New England (CT, RI, MA, VT, NH, ME): 1937—2008



huge leads over Republicans, but by the end of the Reagan presidency, the margin has declined somewhat. House seats followed this pattern closely (figure 5). In 1958, Democrats had a majority of seats and, while they were even in the 1960 elections, they recaptured the majority during the Goldwater candidacy and held about a two to one advantage over Republicans. In the late 1990s until the present, Democrats held, on average, over 80 percent of the House seats in this region. In the pre-1964 period, Democrats won 40 percent of the time in presidential elections (6 states x 7 elections = 42, with Democrats winning 17 of 42 such elections) while in the post 1964 period, Democrats won 63 percent of such contests. Moreover, in the five elections from 1992 through 2008, only New Hampshire in 2000 voted Republican for President, making New England a bastion of Democratic strength.

There has been a rise in Independents, beginning in the 1960s and maintaining until the present time where there has been a resurgence. Given the increase in Democratic representatives and the region's recent, almost pure, record of support for Democratic presidential candidates, what does the rise of strength of Independents mean? Here the question of Independents leaning Democrat or Republican matters.

Figure 5: Democratic Party Identification and National Seat Share in New England (CT, RI, MA, VT, NH, ME): 1937—2008



Party identification in the region begins to shift Democratic in the late 1950s but not until the 1958 election do Democrats win a majority of House seats. The 1960 election saw the Republicans draw even in House seats but not in party identifiers and since that time Democratic identifiers have gone below 50 percent only once and quickly recovered to their better than 2 to 1 advantage. In this region there was a party identification switch in the 1950s, culminating in the 1958 election and, since that time, they have been the dominant party. The House electoral results seem to follow shifts in party identification, not lead them.

Mid-Atlantic

In the mid-Atlantic states (New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware) the pattern of party identification over time shows Democrats and Republicans relatively even over the first twenty-some years of the series. The 1964 election generated a sizeable advantage to Democrats, which they have maintained except for a brief period in the late 1980s, until the present day (Figure 6). The Democratic bulge falls in the late 1960s but then increases until the 1980s when it falls again only to rebound slightly in the post-2005 period. Republicans mirror this pattern. Independents increase in this region also, beginning in the late 1960s with a relatively slow increase until, in the late 1990s, they surpass Republicans as the second choice among those responding to the Gallup question. In the period before 1964, Republicans, on average, held about 55 percent of the House seats (Figure 7). In the 1964 and post period, Democrats have held a majority of House seats,

Figure 6: Party Identification in the Mid-Atlantic States (NY, NJ, PA, DE): 1937—2008

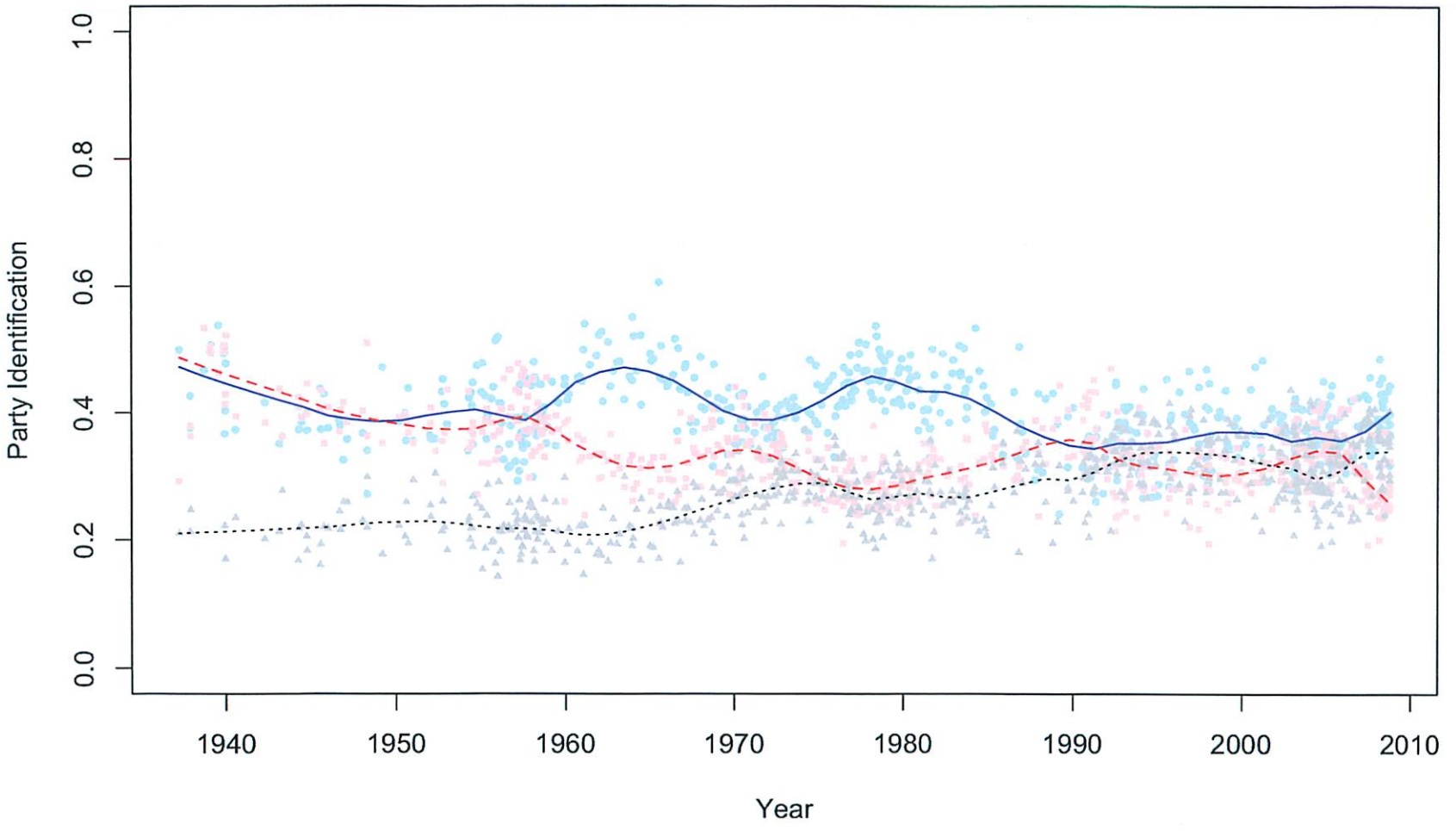
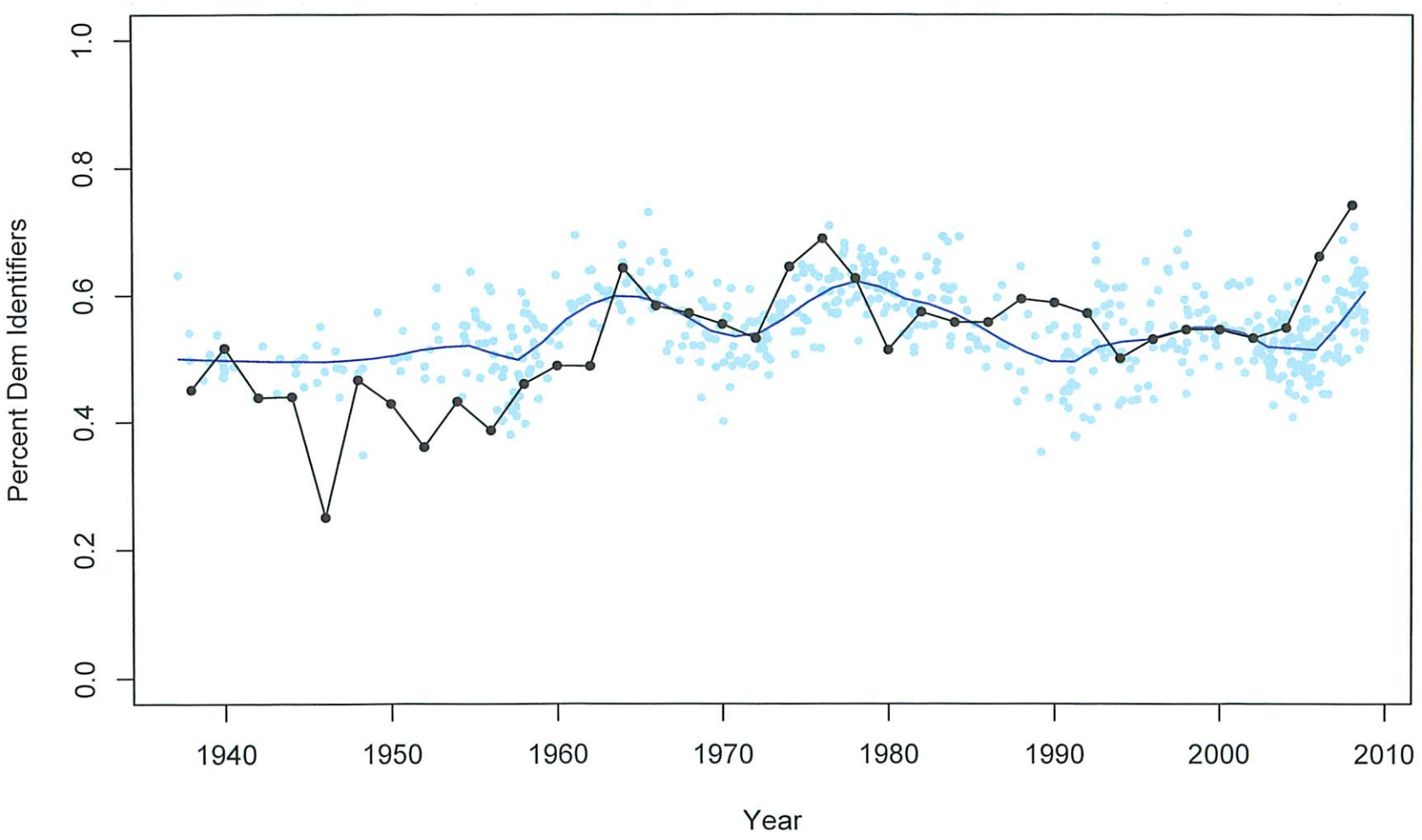


Figure 7: Democratic Party Identification and Seat Share in the Mid-Atlantic States (NY, NJ, PA, DE): 1937—2008



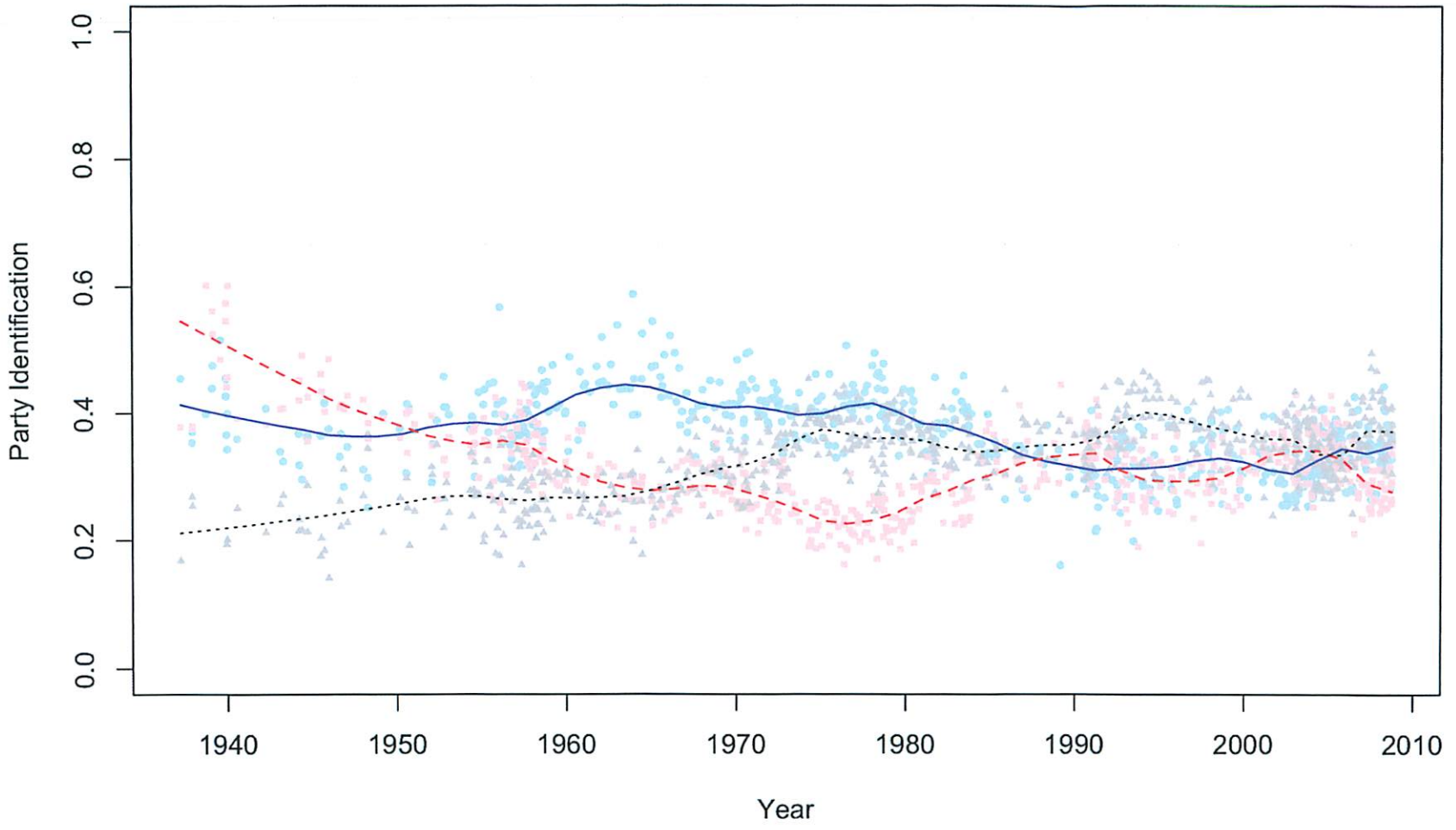
sometimes holding two to one majorities over Republicans. In regards to Presidential elections, Democrats won 16 of 28 possible presidential elections for a 57 percent margin. In the post period they won 30 of 48 such contests for a 63 percent margin. In the last five presidential elections, Democratic candidates have won all 25 state contests. In short, the mid-Atlantic states have gone from fairly competitive to fairly Democratic.

The major switch in identification occurs in the late 1950s, such that by 1960-62 around 60 percent identify as Democrats. House seats trailed the shift in party identifiers through the 1962 elections where Republicans still held a majority of House seats as they had every year since 1940. The 1964 election gave Democrats almost 65 percent of the seats. The decline in Democratic strength beginning in 1980 was accompanied by a drop in House seats from about two to one over the 1974-1978 period to roughly 55 percent until the recent period, where the old higher ratios prevail.

Midwest

In the Midwestern states east of the Mississippi river, Figure 8 shows that Republicans held a slight lead over Democrats in the late 1930s, and throughout the forties the parties are competitive, with Republicans having a slight advantage. In

Figure 8: Party Identification in the Mid-West (OH, MI, IN, IL, WI, MN): 1937—2008



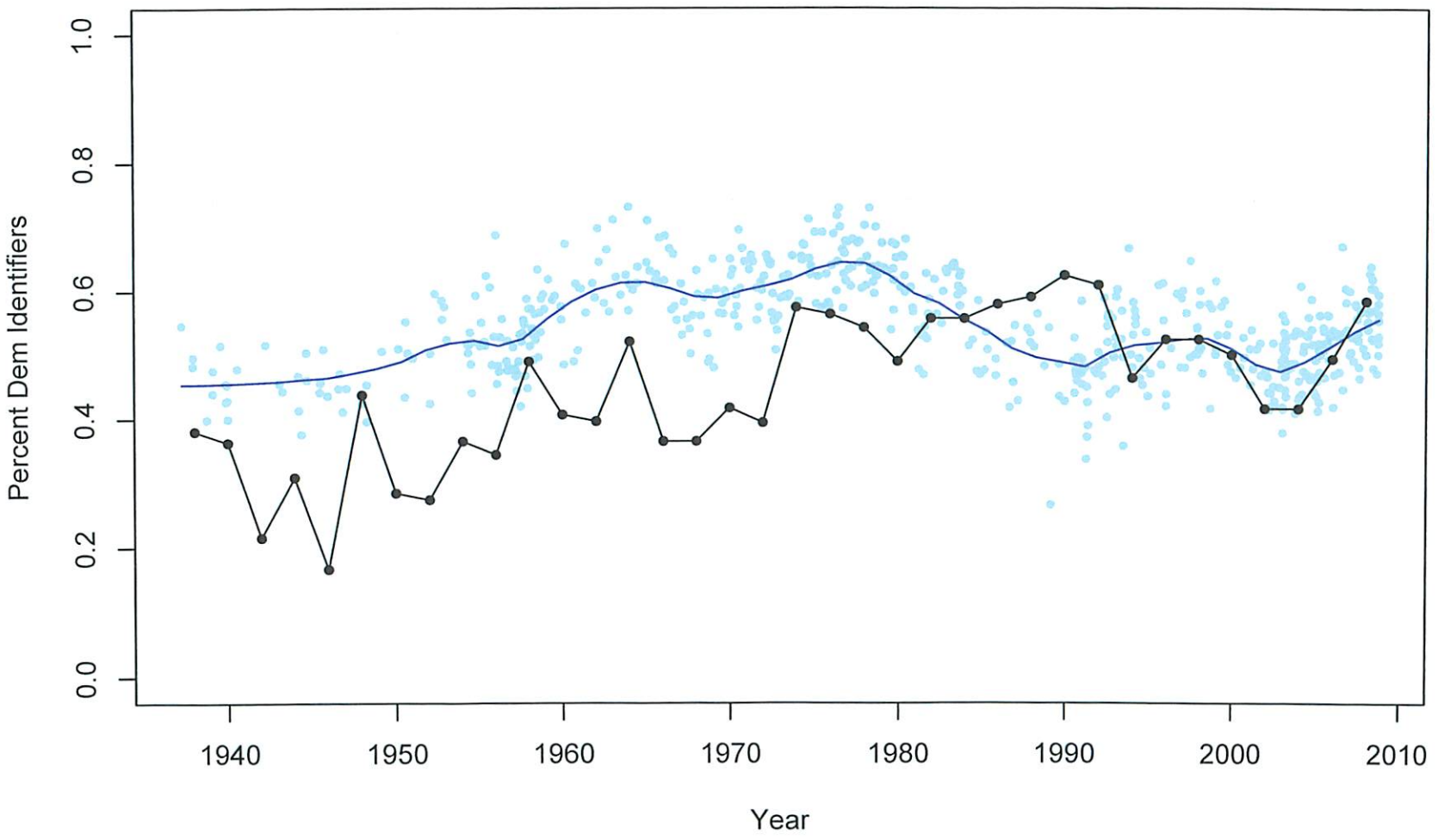
the mid 1950s, Democrats increase their identifiers while Republicans lose some of theirs. In the 1960s, as was the case in many regions, Democrats increase their identifiers at the expense of Republicans who lose significant numbers. The Democrats maintain their lead until the 1980s and Ronald Reagan, at which point the Democratic and Republican numbers vary slightly, with one party then the other having a plurality. Interestingly, Independents remain at roughly the same number until the late 1960s when their numbers rise rapidly until, by the late 1980s, Independents are the plurality.

Presidential voting prior to 1964 reveals a predilection for Republican candidates with the exception of 1940 and 1948, where a majority of these states voted Democratic. In all other election years, 1944, 1952, 1956 and 1960, Republican candidates won majorities in these states, and in 1952 and 1956, Eisenhower carried all five states. In 1964, LBJ won all five states; however, Democratic presidential strength in the region went south after the 1968 Chicago Democratic convention. Nixon's 1968 victory was followed by Republican wins in the region through the 1988 election. Elections after 1988 have yielded consistent Democratic victories in each of the subsequent five elections, and in 2008 Obama won all five states. Thus, presidential election results follow the pattern of this region being competitive but characterized by a shift from Republican to Democrat.

House seats from 1938 to 1964 are controlled by Republicans with Democrats being underrepresented, given the number of their identifiers (Figure 9). With the 1964 election, Democrats hold the majority of seats for the first time and from that time until the present, they won a majority of seats in 17 of 24 elections. House seats followed party identification and while the Midwest has shifted from slightly Republican to slightly Democratic, it remains a competitive battleground region where both parties compete and can point to electoral successes.

Party identification shifts in the 1950s as Republican members fall and Democrats remain the same until by the early 1960s, Democrats have a lead over Republicans. The 1964 election drives Democratic numbers up and Republicans down and this pattern persists until the 1980s when Democratic identifiers decline and Republicans and Independents increase. House electoral rates follow rather than lead party identification shifts. Democrats are even with Republicans by the late 1950s and by 1964 have a clear advantage, yet even in the major shift to Democrats in 1958 Republicans have a majority of seats. Not until 1964, at least a decade behind the start of the switch in identification, do Democrats get a majority of House seats. During the Reagan era, Republicans regain parity in identification yet do not achieve majority electoral status until 1994. Again in regard to House elections, party switches in the electorate precede representation switches in elections.

Figure 9: Democratic Party Identification and Seat Share in the Mid-West (OH, MI, IN, IL, WI, MN): 1937—2008



Plains States

In the plains states (IA, KS, NEB, N. Dakota, S. Dakota) Republicans begin the period as the dominant party but by the mid 1960s are slightly less numerous than Democratic identifiers (Figure 10). The 1968 election and its aftermath return Republicans to plurality status. The Nixon presidency and its attendant ills makes the Democrats the plurality party until the mid-Reagan era when Republicans again become the plurality party. The mix of Democrat to Republican is affected by the continuing rise of voters claiming independence from party affiliations. The number of Independents begins to rise in the 1950s and continues through the 1990s, thereafter falling briefly, to rise again to become larger than either Republicans or Democrats.

The pattern of House elections following shifts in party identification holds in this region also, as shown in Figure 11. Democratic gains in the late 1950s and early 1960s give rise to increasing Democratic successes in House elections. The rise in Democratic House seats is steady until the disastrous 1994 House elections where Democrats fall back to less than 15 percent of House seats. The 2006 elections reversed this trend and for the first time since 1964 Democrats were at parity with Republicans in re members of the House of Representatives and 2010 tilted the results to the Republicans.

Figure 10: Party Identification in the Plains States (IA, ND, SD, NE, KS): 1937—2008

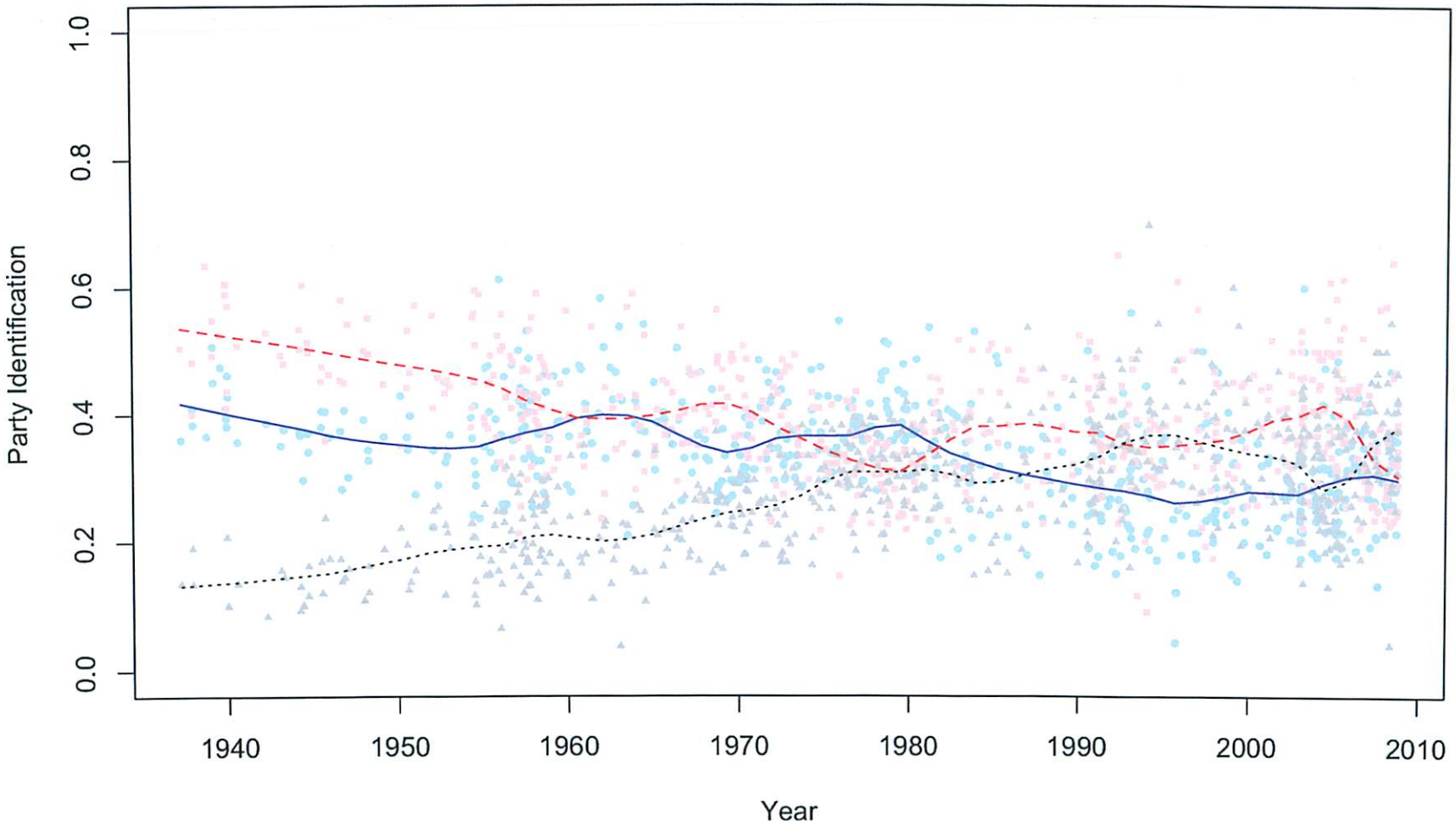
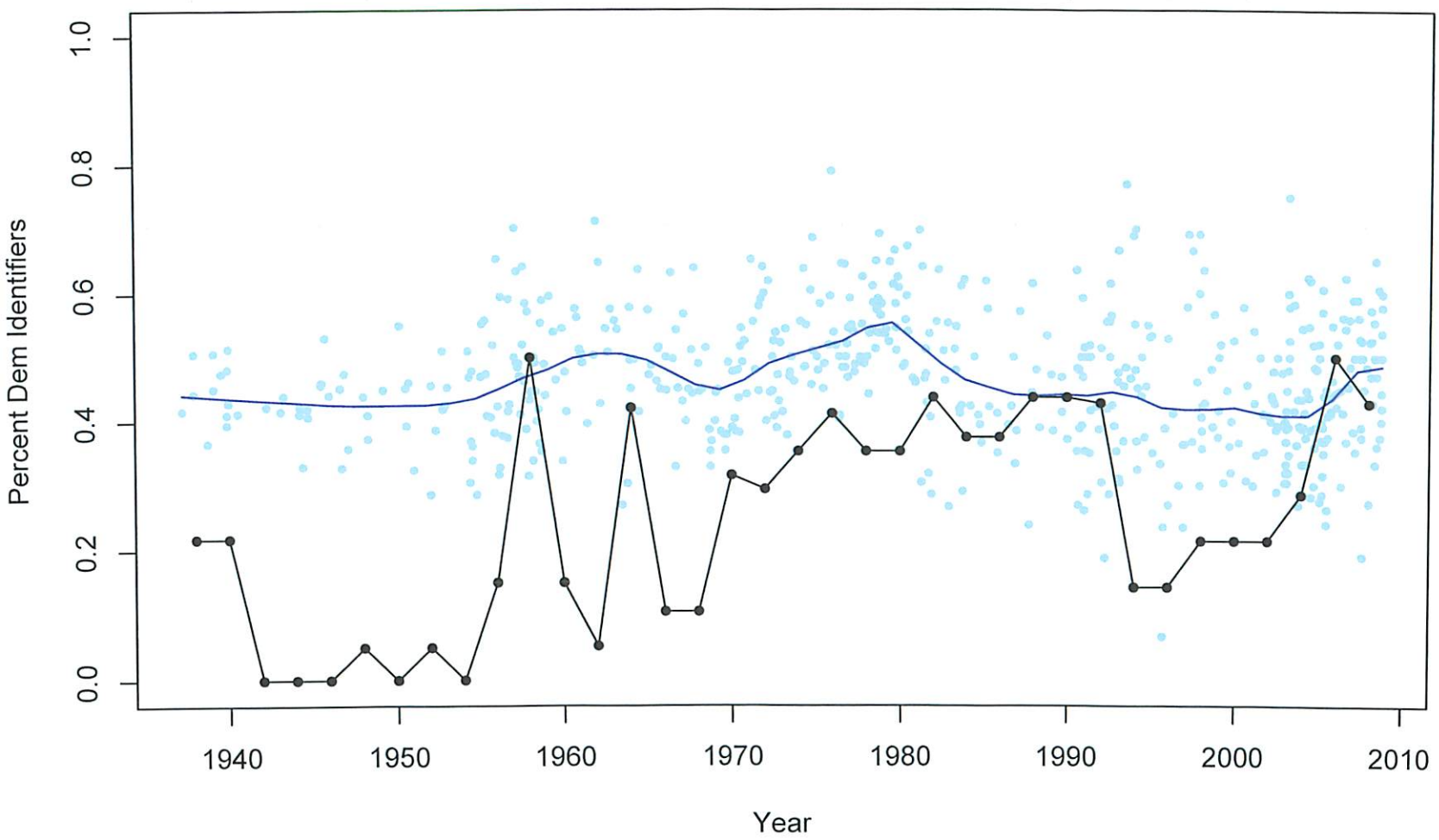


Figure 11: Democratic Party Identification and Seat Share in the Plains States (IA, ND, SD, NE, KS): 1937—2008



The plains states were solidly Republican in the late New Deal era, with every state from 1940 to 1964 voting Republican, with the exception of Iowa voting for Truman in 1948. In 1964, Goldwater lost all five plains states; however, in 1968 they returned to the Republican column and, with the exception of Iowa, have remained Republican through the 2008 presidential elections. Iowa, beginning in 1988, went Democratic at the presidential level and, with the exception of 2004, remains on the Democratic side of the presidential ledger through the Obama election.

Southern Region

Surely no other region has changed as much as the South over the 1937 to 2010 period and numerous studies have focused on the South (Stanley, 1988; Blade, 2004; Black and Black, 2003). In 1937-38, slightly over 84 percent of Southerners identified themselves as Democrats and roughly that level persisted until the 1950s when the number fell below 80 percent and continued to fall through the 1960s until the 1970s, when identification with the Democratic party moved between about 2/3rds to 70 percent. The Reagan era continued to eat away at Democratic numbers, though as late as 1992, Democrats still claimed 57% of the electorate. However, the 1990s ended the era of Democratic majorities in the South. After the 1994 election, Democrats were at parity with Republican identifiers and by 2000 they were a minority party (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Party Identification in the South (LA, AR, MS, AL, FL, GA, TN, SC, NC, VA): 1937—2008

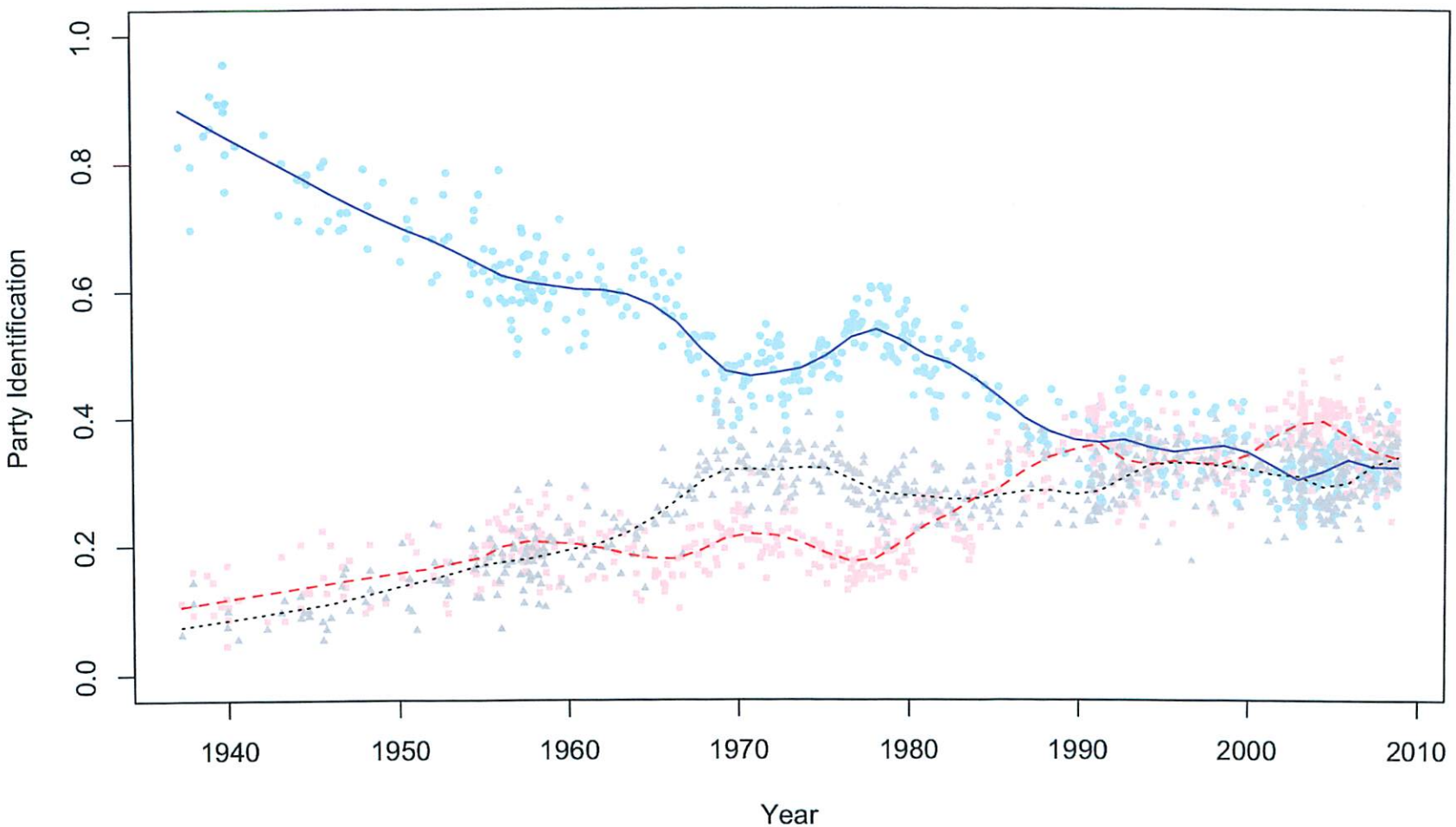
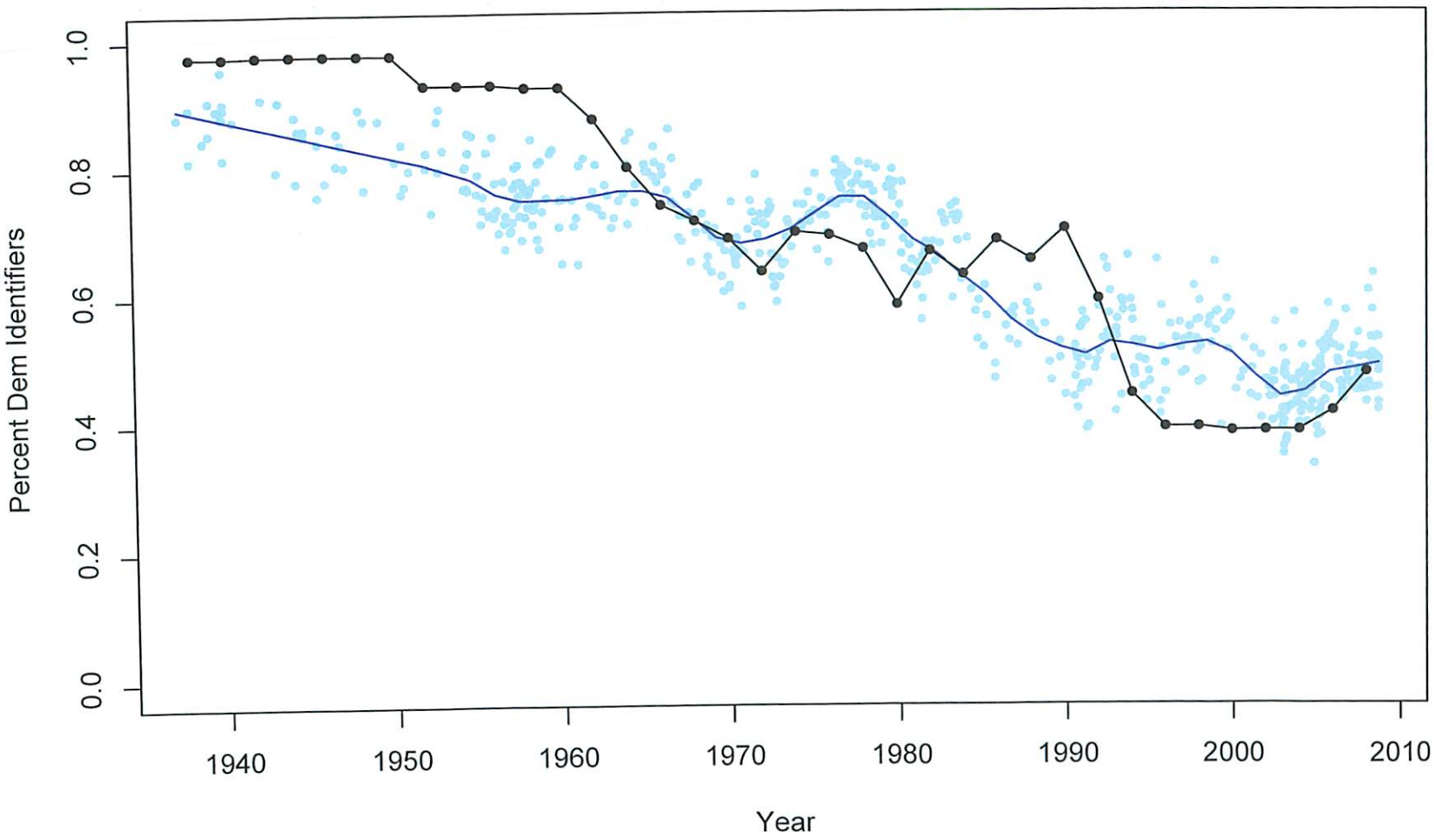


Figure 13: Democratic Party Identification and Seat Share in the South (LA, AR, MS, AL, FL, GA, TN, SC, NC, VA): 1937—2008



House electoral results followed party identification shifts rather than leading them (Figure 13). Until the 1962 election, well over 90% of Southern House members were Democrats and even in the Barry Goldwater election of 1964, 80% of House seats were Democratic, and as late as 1978, 2/3rds of House seats were still Democratic. In the 1980s through 1992, Democrats did no worse than 58% (1980) and in 1990 commandeered 70% of House seats. In 1994, Republicans captured a majority of House seats and continue to hold the majority through 2010.

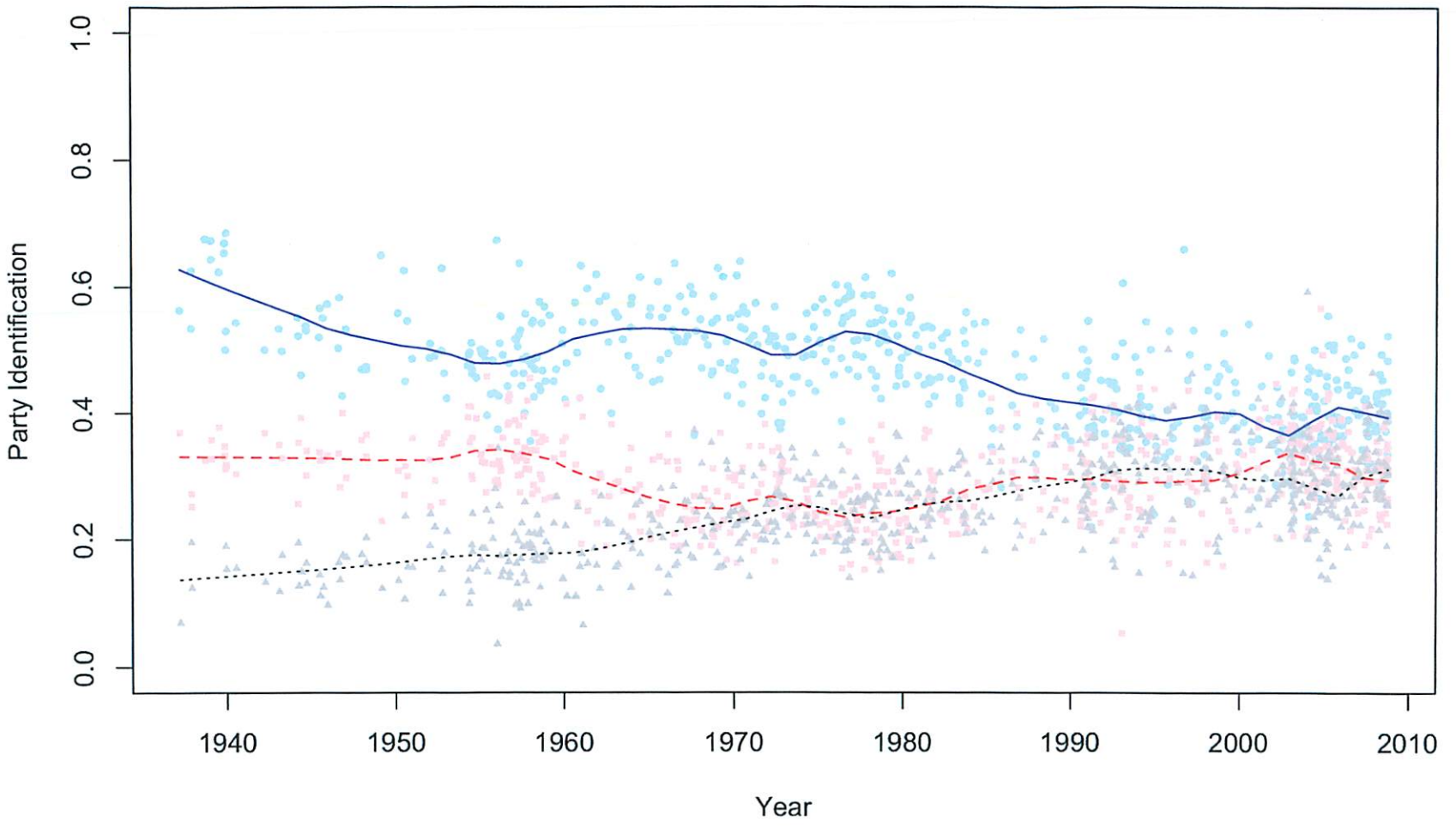
Presidential voting for Republicans in the South preceded party identification shifts. In 1936, 1940 and 1944, all Southern states voted Democratic. In the 1948 presidential race where Strom Thurmond ran on the Dixiecrat ticket, no state went Republican, although Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina went for Thurmond. The Republican breakthrough to electoral college votes occurred in 1952 when Eisenhower won Florida, Texas, Virginia and Tennessee, and in 1956 he won the same states, adding Louisiana to the Southern mix. Nixon held three Southern states in 1960 (VA, FLA, TENN). The LBJ years, including 1968, were tumultuous in the South with Democrats carrying just five of twenty state elections. In 1972, Nixon carried all ten states, but in 1976, the Southerner Jimmy Carter carried nine of ten states. The Reagan-Bush years were highly Republican with the only Democratic win being Georgia in 1980. Even the Southern candidate Clinton could only claim eight states in two elections. Since Clinton, Democrats have won only three states, all in 2008 by narrow margins. In short, by 1952, even though most Southerners still identified as Democratic, the region was already leaning Republican at the presidential level, and since 1980, Democratic presidential candidates have carried

less than 15% of Southern states. The shift to majority House status came in 1994, delayed by incumbency and the personal vote (Han and Brady, 2011).

Border

The Border states (Figure 14) – Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri and W. Virginia – began the period solidly Democratic with about 2/3rds identifying as Democrats. In the 1940s and 1950s, these states remained solidly Democratic with identification ranging from .54 to .65 percent. As in other regions, the 1964 election boosted Democratic identifiers to over 2/3rds of residents; however, unlike other regions, these states remain strongly Democratic, with over 60% identifying through the turbulent late 1960s and 1970s. It is not until Ronald Reagan that the Democrats lose some ground to the Republicans, such that by the mid 1980s Democrats constitute only a bare majority. Republican identifiers mirror these results: a fall off in the 1960s and then a gain in the 1980s. Independents begin a slow increase in the late 1960s and again gain in the 1990s until they reach parity with Republicans post 1994.

Figure 14: Party Identification in the Border States (KY, MD, MO, WV): 1937—2008

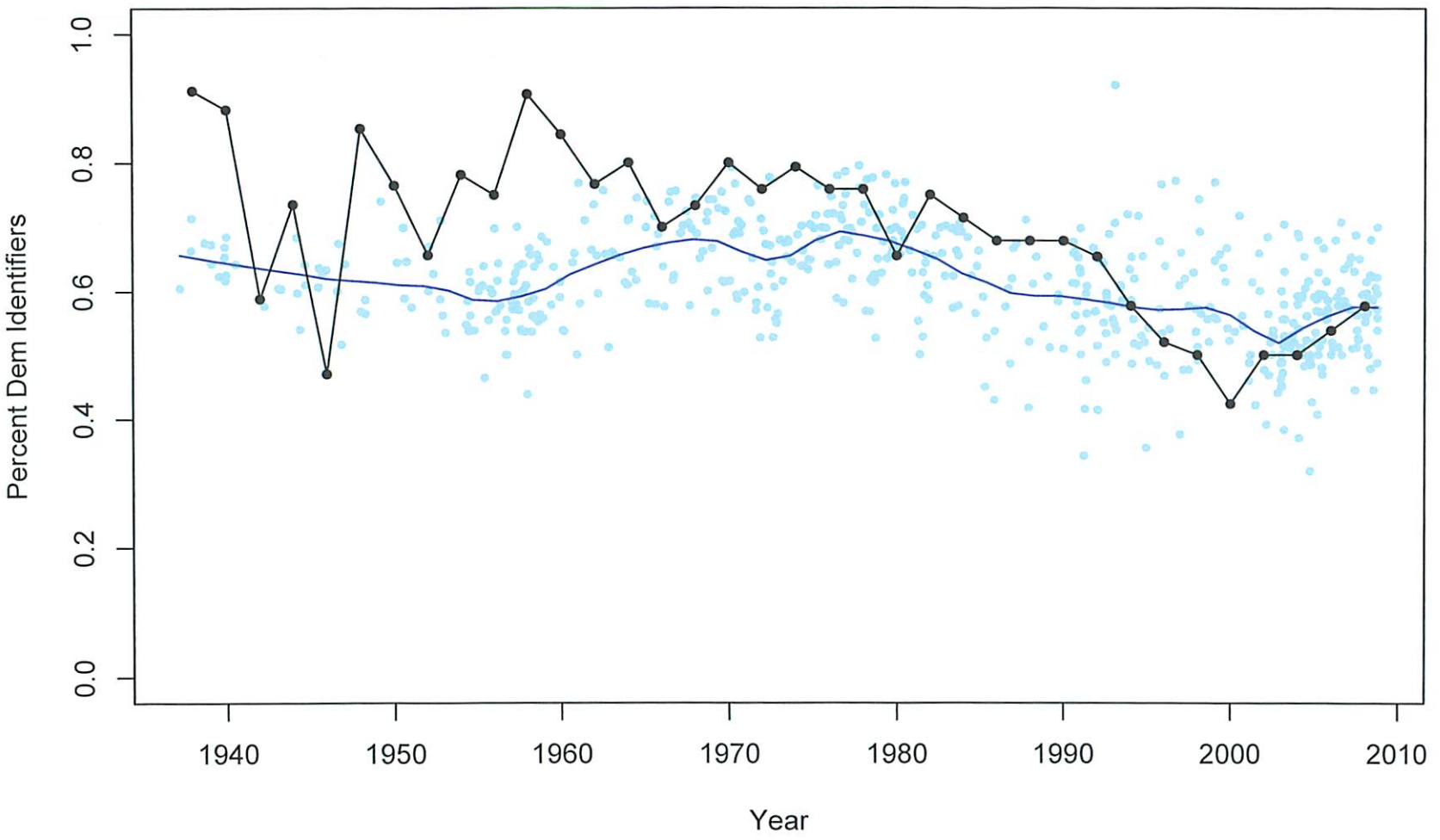


Electoral results in House races are consistent with previous results (Figure 15). From 1938 to 1994, Democrats lose a majority in only the 1946 election and have at least a two to one advantage in all other years. The 1994 elections drop Democrats below 60% of the seats, and from 1996 on the region's House seats are divided about 50/50. Thus, as elsewhere, House seat wins and losses follow shifts in party identification. In contrast, presidential elections varied more than did House elections. In the 1936 to 1960 period, Democrats captured 75% of state results --- 24 of 28 state results, whereas in the 1964 to 1980 period, they fell slightly to over 70%. The 1980 onward period where party identification moves toward Republicans finds Democrats winning only 44% of these state contests. While presidential results follow party identification more closely than in other regions, the presidential Republicanism of the region shows up a decade or more before House results move Republican.

Southwest

The American Southwest (AZ, NM, OK, and TX) show the only shift in identification close to that of the South (Figure 16). Roughly from 1938 through 1978, Democrats enjoy a huge advantage over Republicans. However, there are differences over that time period. Democrats begin to fall post 1964 as do Republicans. Thus, while the margin is maintained, the increase in Independents is the major movement of the era. The 1980s and Ronald Reagan herald the end of the Democratic era and with the 1994 elections, Republicans become the majority, with Independents next,

Figure 15: Democratic Party Identification and Seat Share in the Border States (KY, MD, MO, WV): 1937—2008



followed by the Democrats. House electoral results follow this pattern post 1960s. In the 1960s and until the 1980s Democratic seat shares follow party identification scores closely (Figure 17). The Reagan era shows decreased party identification with Democratic incumbents holding on to give them a seats to votes advantage. The 1994 Republican victory yields a Republican seats to votes advantage still held. In sum, the Southwest has moved from a strong Democratic region to a Republican region.

Presidential elections move Republican earlier and in greater strength than House elections. In the four elections from 1936 to 1948, Republicans did not win a single state. Then in 1952 and 1956, Eisenhower won all four. In 1960 and 1964, Democrats take 6 of 8 state elections; however, from 1968 to 1980, only Texas in 1968 and 1976 goes Democratic. Since 1980, Republicans have taken over 80% of state contests, and the dominant electoral college state, Texas, has voted Republican in every election.

Mountain West

The Rocky Mountain states went solidly Democratic in the New Deal era, and when our time series begins in 1937 the regions is still Democratic (Figure 18). Beginning with the Eisenhower era, the region is about equally divided between Democrats

Figure 16: Party Identification in the Southwest (TX, AZ, NM, OK): 1937—2008

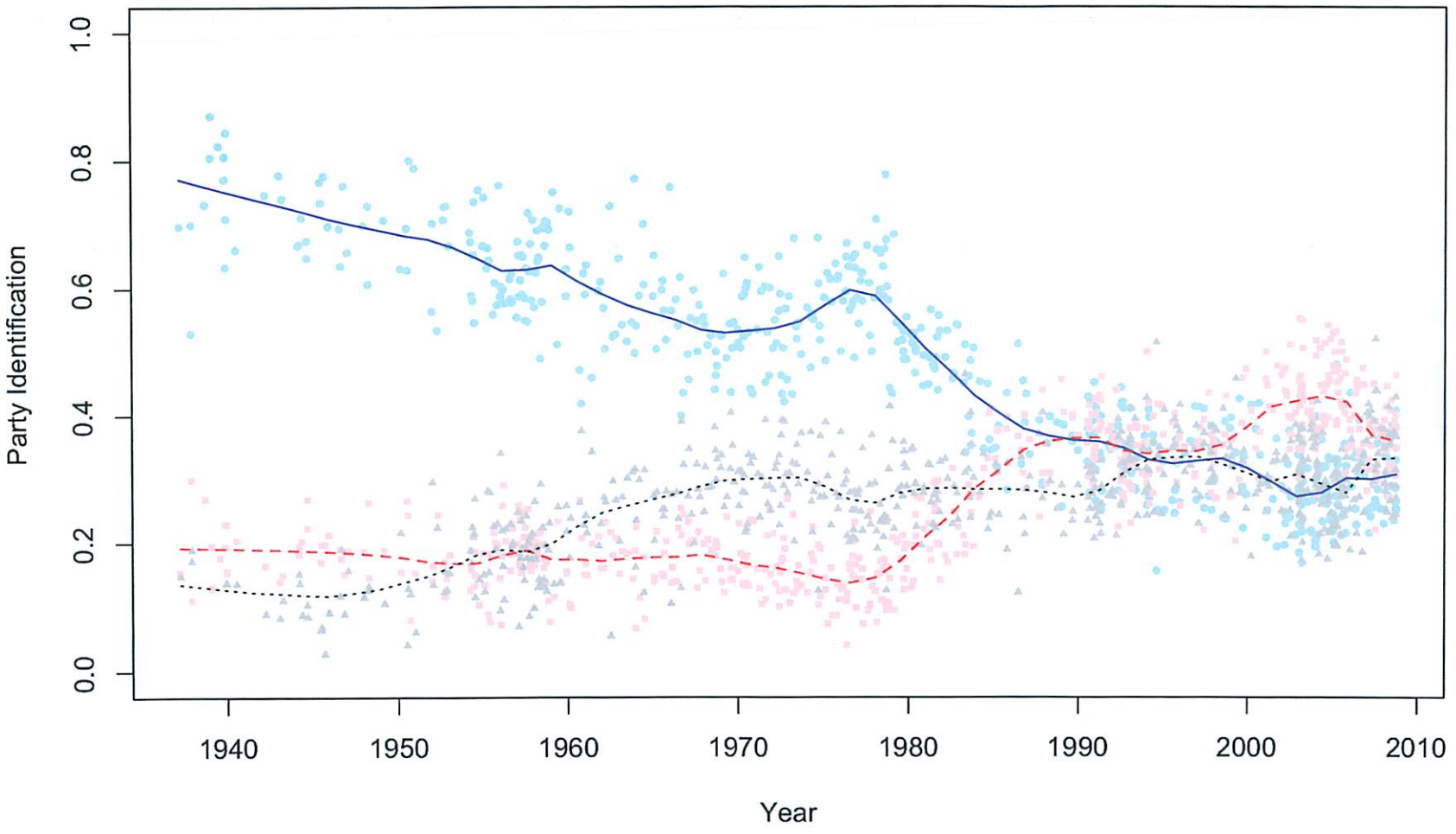
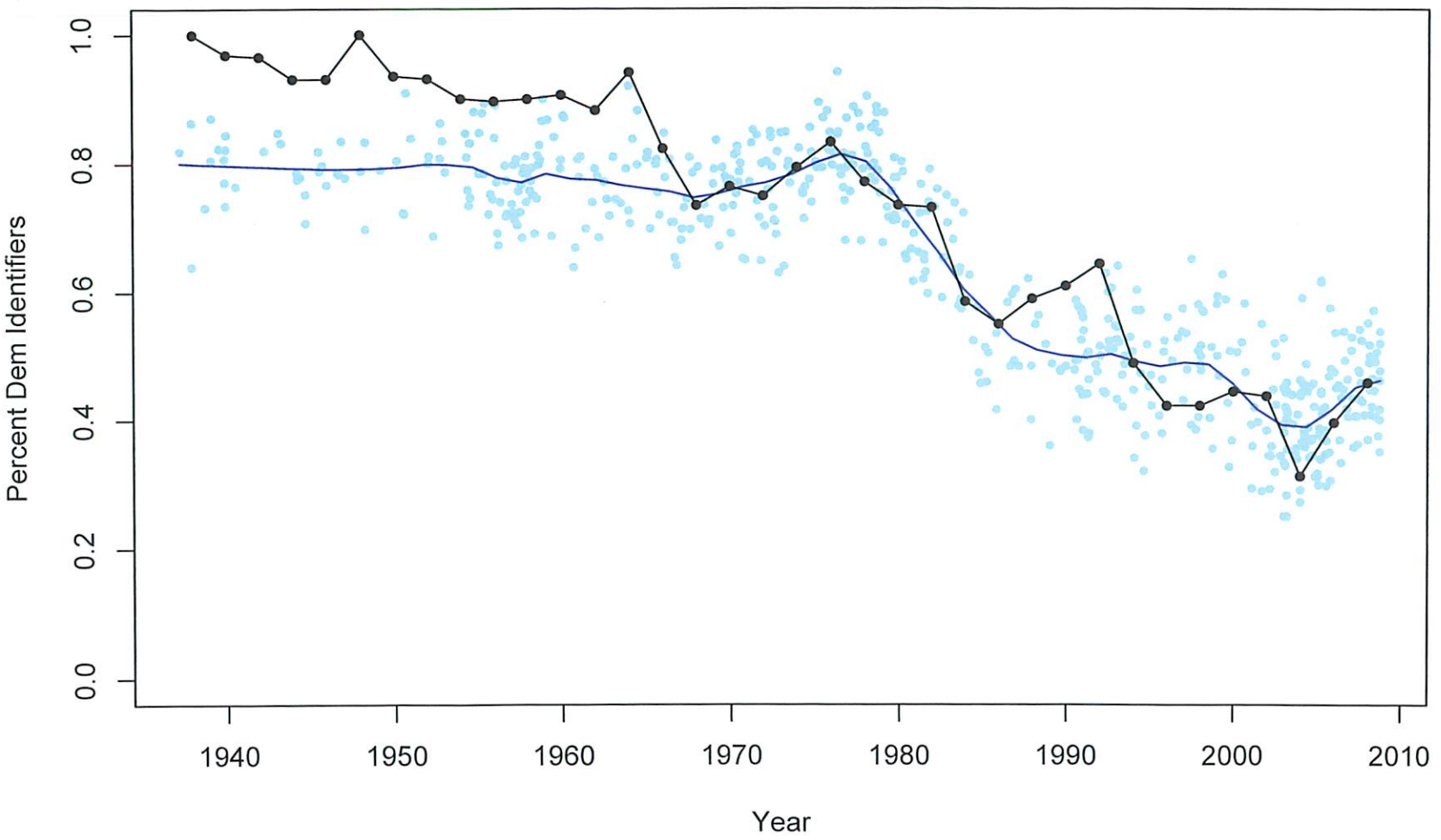


Figure 17: Democratic Party Identification and Seat Share in the Southwest (TX, AZ, NM, OK): 1937—2008



and Republicans: 40% each, with 20% Independent. The Goldwater election generated an increase in Democratic identifiers and a decrease in Republicans. However, by the time of the 1968 election, Democrats were declining and Independents were on the rise such that going into the 1980s they were at 40%, with Democrats having a slight 30 to 35% of the voters, and Republicans last. With Reagan, Republicans become the dominant party, switching with Independents as the plurality over the next 25 to 30 years, with Democrats clearly in last place.

House electoral seats roughly follow the party identification pattern with Democrats having majorities until the 1980s (Figure 19). The region voted Republican in elections like 1946, where national forces favored Republicans but normally returned Democratic majorities in House elections. Then during the Carter presidency Democratic vote shares began to fall and were in a minority until the Clinton era, when they come back to parity. The 1994 election yielded huge gains to Republicans, and not until the 2006 and 2008 elections did Democrats regain parity in House seats. In the post-New Deal, pre-Eisenhower period, of the 24 state elections only three went Republican: Colorado twice and Wyoming once. Eisenhower won all six states both times he ran, and Nixon won four of six in 1960, while Goldwater lost all in 1964. The six elections over the 1968 to 1990 time period saw every state vote Republican in all six elections. Clinton ran competitively, winning 6 of 12 states in his two slots, while Bush won 11 of 12, and

Figure 18: Party Identification in the Mountain West States (MT, CO, ID, WY, UT, NV): 1937—2008

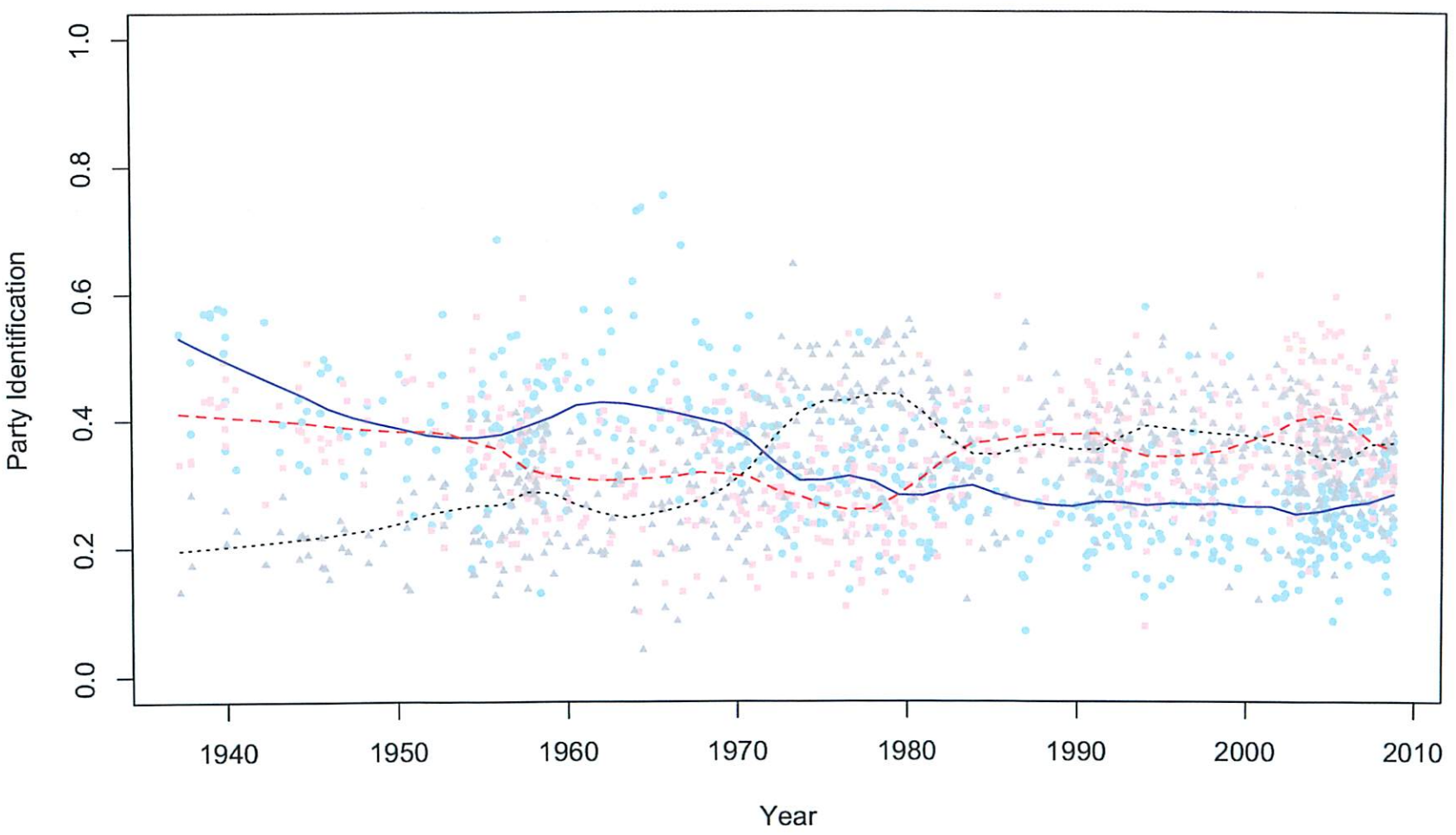
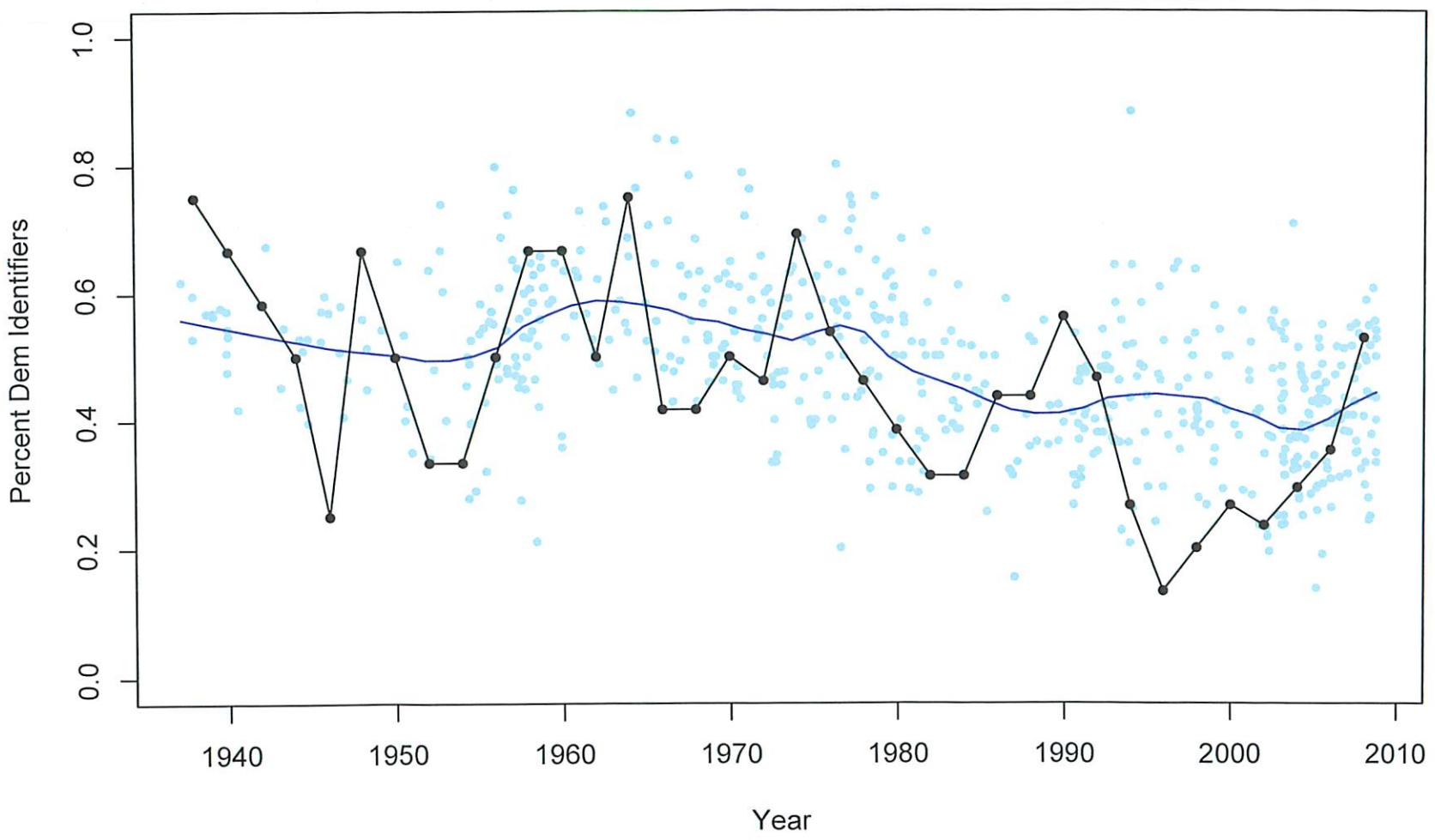


Figure 19: Democratic Party Identification and Seat Share in the Mountain West States (MT, CO, ID, WY, UT, NV): 1937—2008



Obama narrowly carried New Mexico and Colorado in 2008. Roughly, this region has been Republican at the presidential level since 1968, at least a decade before Republicans were the plurality party in identification.

Pacific Coast

Party identification in the Pacific states has been predominantly Democratic over our 60-odd year period (Figure 20). From the late thirties to the 1980s, Democrats were either the majority party, 80% identification, or the plurality party. Then with the Reagan era the two parties reached parity until the early 1990s when Democrats again become the plurality party. This region, known for its independent and sometimes progressive tendencies, has long had many voters identifying themselves as Independent, such that even during the height of the New Deal, 20% or more identified as Independent. That number begins to expand in the late 1960s, post-1964, and continues a gradual rise until the present, where they are second to Democrats and ahead of Republican identifiers.

House elections in this region initially follow party identification (Figure 21). However, beginning with the 1946 election, Republican House candidates are in the majority until the 1960s when, due to Goldwater, Democrats become the majority party and remain so even during the brief mid to late 1980s resurgence. Roughly

Figure 20: Party Identification in the Pacific States (CA, OR, WA): 1937—2008

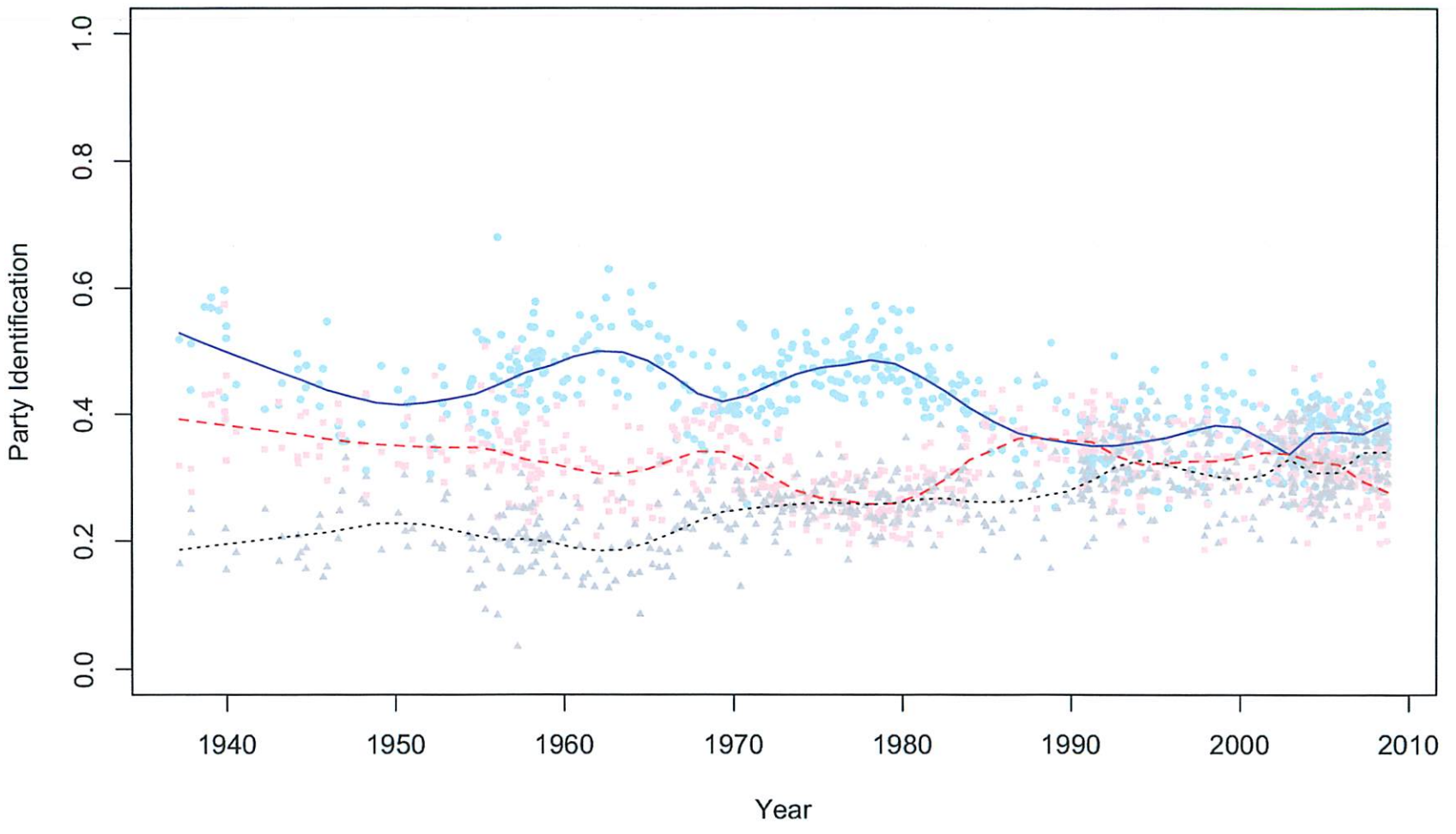
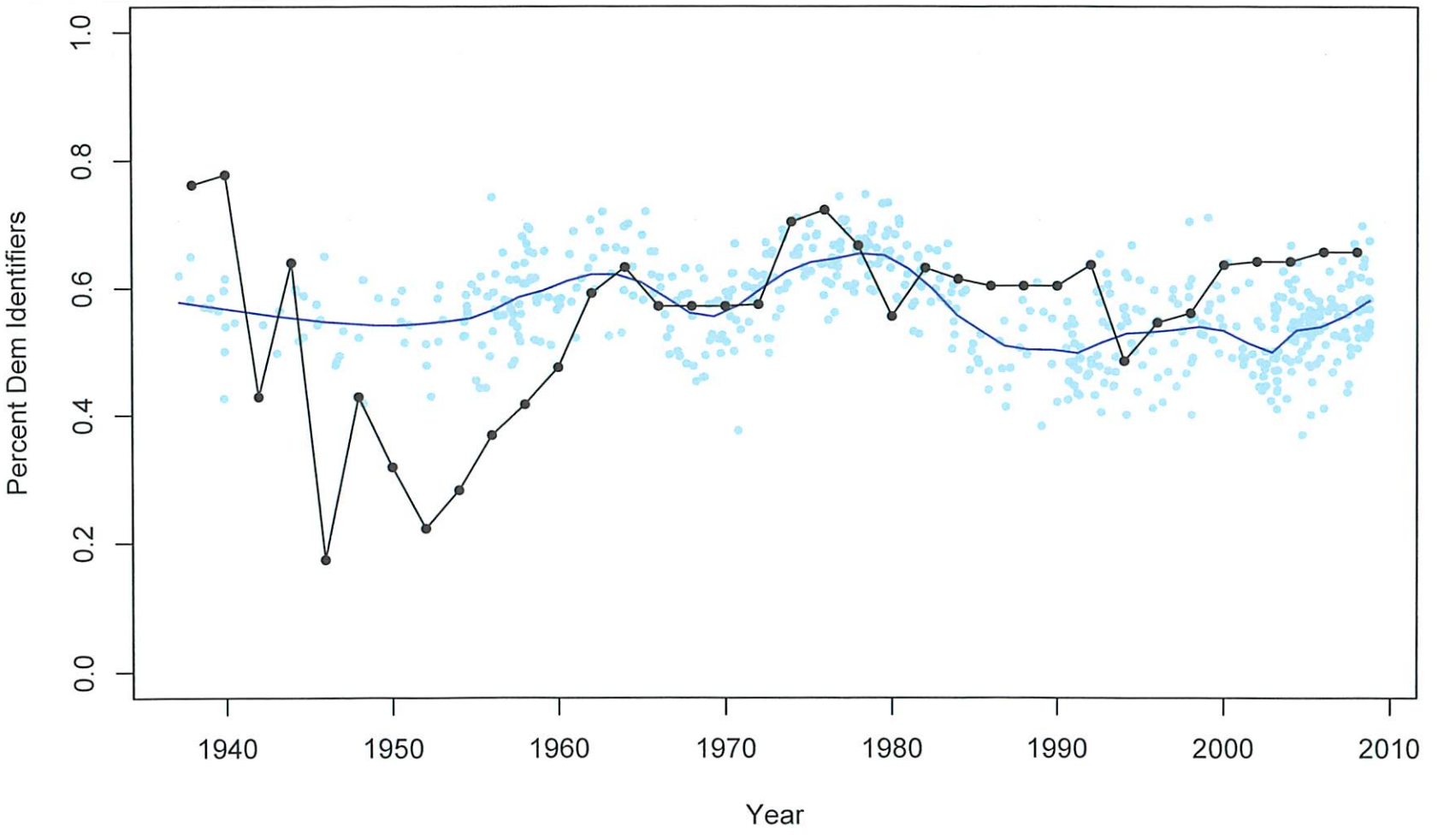


Figure 21: Democratic Party Identification and Seat Share in the Pacific States (CA, OR, WA): 1937—2008



from the mid 1970s onward, Democrats receive more seats than their share of identifiers would warrant. House seats in this region are, with the exception of the 1946 to early 1960s period, primarily Democratic. The 1946 to early sixties period over represents Republicans, given levels of identification, and the 1980s over represents Democrats, given the rough parity in party identification during that era.

The New Deal era made the Democrats the majority party and from 1936 to 1952 at the presidential level only Oregon voted Republican once, for Dewey in 1948. In 1952 and 1956, Eisenhower won all three states, and Nixon held them in 1960, even though throughout this period party identification in the state remained Democratic. The 1964 debacle resulted in all three states voting Democratic, and Humphrey won California and Oregon in 1968. The Nixon reelection brought forward a four election period where Republicans won every state. The 1988 election yielded a Democratic win in California and Republican wins in Oregon and Washington, and ended Republican presidential success. The 1992 election was the first of five straight elections where Democrats captured all the electoral votes in the region. In regard to voting and identification, the Republican victories from 1952 through 1960 are in need of explanation as are Nixon's 1968 California win. These Republican victories came before the shift toward Republicans in the 1980s, thus following the familiar pattern of presidential voting leading shifts in identification as not being correlated.