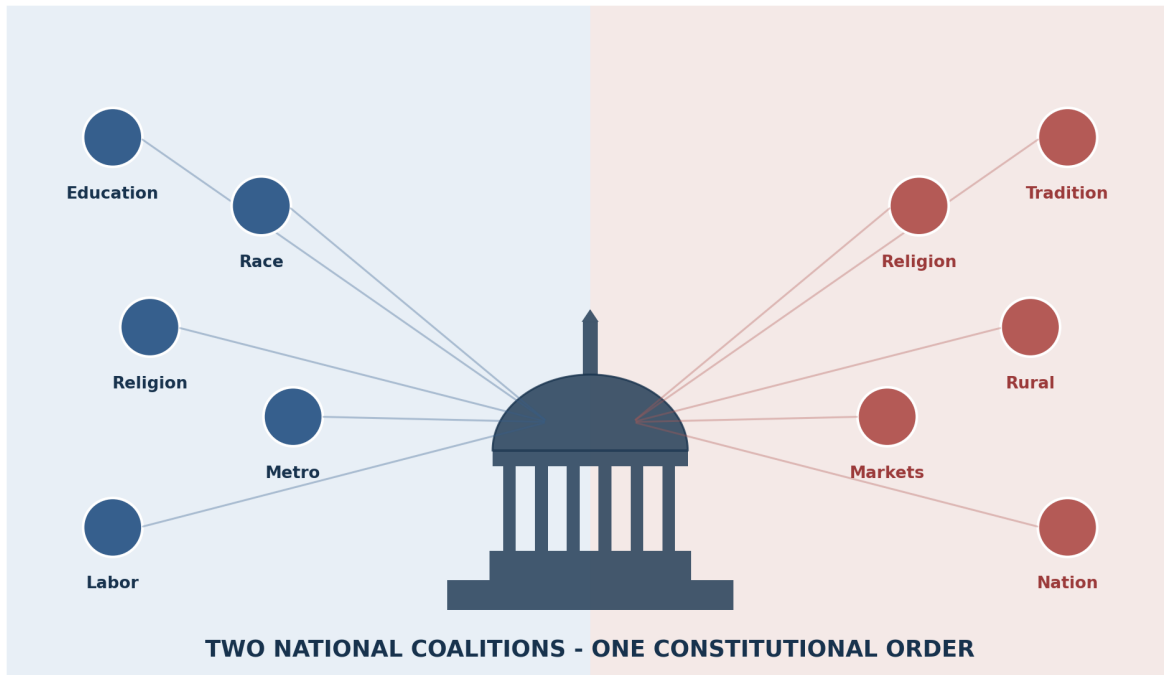


TWO PARTIES, TWO COALITIONAL ORDERS?

Democratic and Republican Visions of America

Historical Development, Social Coalitions, Political Economy, Institutions, Culture, Law, Information Systems, and Competing Visions of the American Political Order



Final Production Correction Edition

The American Newspaper - <https://americannewspaper.org>

AmericanTV - <https://americantv.org>

Research cutoff: September 7, 2026

Publication Note

This edition presents the expanded scholarly analysis as a publication-grade research monograph. It treats the Democratic and Republican parties as historically evolving coalitions rather than unitary ideological actors. Contemporary statements are bounded by the research cutoff, and election outcomes are not treated as permanent evidence of realignment without longitudinal support.

Authors: The American Newspaper - <https://americannewspaper.org>
 AmericanTV - <https://americantv.org>

Abstract

The contemporary Democratic-Republican divide is best understood as the interaction of social identity, education, race, religion, geography, political economy, national identity, institutional trust, cultural conflict, elite mobilization and constitutional structure. Each party remains internally heterogeneous, yet the two national coalitions increasingly organize different combinations of social groups, moral outlooks, policy preferences, institutional loyalties and narratives of American identity. The resulting polarization is simultaneously ideological, affective, geographic, educational, racial, religious and institutional.

This monograph reconstructs the historical genealogy of those coalitions, examines their philosophical and policy differences, maps their social and economic bases, analyzes elite-mass divergence and partisan media environments, and evaluates whether contemporary partisan conflict increasingly resembles a contest between rival models of American social order.

Central conclusion: the United States is not literally composed of two non-overlapping peoples. It is better described as one constitutional order containing **two increasingly differentiated but internally diverse coalitional systems**.

Edition purpose. This is a separate, substantially expanded work built from the earlier 48-page scholarly edition. It adds systematic author-date citations, survey field dates and sample information, evidence-classification labels, expanded elite-mass comparisons, 18 empirical figures, deeper policy and foreign-policy chapters, a larger literature review, a page-numbered contents system, accessibility-oriented PDF tagging, and an expanded scholarly bibliography.

Interpretive discipline. Throughout the report, four labels distinguish the status of claims: **EMPIRICAL FINDING** measured or documentary evidence; **SCHOLARLY INTERPRETATION** a claim advanced in the literature; **ANALYTICAL INFERENCE** this monograph's synthesis; and **FORWARD-LOOKING SCENARIO** conditional propositions about future change.

How to Read This Monograph

The document is designed for two reading modes: a fast policy-research reading through the Executive Synthesis, figures and matrices; and a graduate-seminar reading that follows the historical, theoretical and evidentiary apparatus chapter by chapter.

Label / device	Meaning	How to interpret it
EMPIRICAL FINDING	Survey result, election result, statute, roll call, court opinion or other documentary observation.	Check population, field date, denominator, wording and source note before comparing percentages.
SCHOLARLY INTERPRETATION	An explanation advanced in the academic literature.	Competing interpretations are identified where the literature is contested; citation does not imply universal scholarly agreement.
ANALYTICAL INFERENCE	This monograph's synthesis of multiple bodies of evidence.	Treat as an argument supported by evidence, not as a directly observed fact.
FORWARD-LOOKING SCENARIO	Conditional account of how coalitions could change.	Not an election prediction. Each scenario specifies mechanisms and indicators that would strengthen or weaken it.
Party ID	Self-identification as Democrat/Republican or, where explicitly stated, party leaning.	Not interchangeable with ideological self-identification or presidential vote choice.
Validated vote	Survey responses linked to official turnout records.	Stronger for turnout classification than self-report alone, but still subject to survey and matching uncertainty.
Elite-mass ladder	Platform → executive → Congress → organized interests/activists → ordinary partisans → factions.	Avoid saying “the party believes” when evidence exists only at one level.
Trend language	Widening, narrowing, changing form, unsettled.	Reserved for longitudinal evidence; one election is not treated as a completed realignment.

Navigation

For a 20-minute reading

Read the Executive Synthesis, the historical realignment section, [Figures 1-24 and Tables 1-31](#) Differences, the Two Americas model and the Final Integrated Theory.

For a research reading

Begin with Methodology and Major Interpretive Traditions, then use the policy and demographic chapters together with Appendices A–H and the 215-source bibliography

Neutrality and scope

The study does not ask which party is preferable. It compares coalitions, policies and institutions as empirical and historical objects. Apparent symmetry is not imposed where evidence indicates asymmetry; conversely, asymmetry is not inferred from partisan self-description. The research cutoff is **September 7, 2026**.

UNCERTAINTY RULE FOR FIGURES. Survey graphics show point estimates unless an interval is explicitly displayed. Compact figures do not plot margins of error by default. Denominator, field dates, sample information and subgroup cautions are stated in captions or Appendix B/D. A visible gap between bars should not be read as statistically significant without source-level uncertainty information.

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Executive Synthesis

The Democratic-Republican divide is best understood as a conflict between two historically assembled, internally heterogeneous coalitional orders. The deepest structure is not one left-right axis but the interaction of social identity, education, geography, race, religion, political economy, national identity, institutional trust, elite mobilization, and constitutional incentives.

Table 1

Twenty Foundational Propositions

#	Observed difference	Underlying value / structure	Historical origin	Social base	Mechanism and consequence	Exceptions / direction
1	Democrats support a more active social and regulatory state.	Substantive equal opportunity; social insurance.	Progressivism, New Deal, Great Society.	Lower-income voters, labor, many minorities, liberals.	Greater willingness to tax, regulate and insure social risks.	Market-oriented Democrats; durable but instrumentally flexible.
2	Republicans are more skeptical of redistribution but not uniformly of state power.	Property, individual responsibility, sovereignty and order.	Business conservatism plus postwar movement conservatism.	Business conservatives, social conservatives, many noncollege voters.	Lower-tax preferences coexist with strong border, trade and security powers.	Populist defense of major benefits complicates small-government rhetoric.
3	Education has become a major partisan cleavage.	Credentials, professional socialization, institutional location.	Post-1960s higher education expansion; postindustrial occupational sorting.	BA/postgraduate voters increasingly Democratic; noncollege voters more Republican.	Education bundles occupation, geography and cultural outlook.	Not intelligence; income does not map cleanly onto the diploma divide.
4	Democrats are stronger in metropolitan America.	Pluralism and knowledge/service economies.	Urban diversification and professionalization.	Urban cores and many inner/affluent suburbs.	Density and economic structure reinforce diverse social networks.	Suburbs remain competitive; many urban working-class voters are cross-pressured.
5	Republicans are strongest in rural and exurban America.	Localism, traditional institutions and lower-density political economies.	Long-run geographic sorting, especially since the late 20th century.	Rural/small-town voters, agriculture, energy, gun-owning constituencies.	Political identity becomes geographically embedded.	Rural Black and Native communities differ substantially.
6	The Democratic coalition is more racially and religiously diverse.	Pluralistic national membership.	New Deal Black realignment, civil rights, post-1965 immigration.	Black voters, many Hispanic/Asian voters, religious nones, Jews, Muslims.	Coalition diversity raises the salience of anti-discrimination and incorporation.	2024 showed meaningful Republican gains among some minority voters.
7	The Republican coalition remains more heavily White and Christian, while becoming more multiracial.	Cultural continuity, religious traditionalism, sovereignty.	Southern realignment and religious-right mobilization.	White evangelicals, many practicing Christians, noncollege voters.	Religious institutions and cultural conflict reinforce partisanship.	Growth among Hispanic, Black and Asian Republicans makes racial shorthand less sufficient.
8	Democrats place greater average trust in expert institutions.	Professional administration and epistemic specialization.	Progressive/New Deal administrative traditions.	Professionals, scientists, academics, civil servants.	Expert authority supports regulatory governance.	Democratic populist currents distrust corporations and some institutions.
9	Republican politics contains stronger anti-establishment currents.	Popular accountability and suspicion of autonomous institutions.	Conservative media, Tea Party, Trump-era populism.	MAGA and national-conservative networks; many noncollege voters.	Distrust shifts authority toward elected executives and counter-establishment media.	Traditional business and national-security elites remain influential.
10	The parties interpret equality differently.	Substantive/structural versus formal/individual equality.	Civil-rights liberalism and conservative reaction to race-conscious remedies.	Civil-rights groups versus colorblind-equality constituencies.	Different diagnoses of discrimination generate different remedies.	Both coalitions endorse equal citizenship at an abstract level.

Evidence anchors, propositions 1-10: Schickler (2016); Grossmann & Hopkins (2015, 2016); Pew Research Center partisan-coalition, government-role and validated-voter studies (2024-26); Cramer (2016); Rodden (2019). Denominators and survey documentation: Appendix B/D.

Table 1 (continued)

#	Observed difference	Underlying value / structure	Historical origin	Social base	Mechanism and consequence	Exceptions / direction
11	The parties prioritize different liberties when rights collide.	Autonomy/equal participation versus noninterference/traditional constitutional rights.	Postwar rights revolution and conservative legal movement.	Reproductive/LGBT/civil-rights constituencies versus religion/gun/property constituencies.	Rights conflicts drive judicial appointments and constitutional politics.	Neither party is simply pro- or anti-liberty.
12	Immigration divides the parties mainly over enforcement, admission and incorporation.	Pluralism/humanitarianism versus sovereignty/order.	Post-1965 immigration, border politics, post-2000s polarization.	Immigrant communities, business factions, restrictionist voters.	Different threat and membership models produce divergent policy bundles.	Large bipartisan majorities support border security and high-skilled legal immigration.
13	Family, sexuality and gender have become high-intensity partisan conflicts.	Autonomy/pluralism versus traditional authority/social continuity.	Sexual revolution, Roe, religious-right mobilization, same-sex marriage, transgender politics.	Secular/social liberals versus religious/social conservatives.	Disputes center on who governs moral and cultural reproduction.	Same-sex marriage is less polarized than newer transgender-policy questions.
14	The old business-versus-labor model no longer captures political economy.	Multiple capitalisms and multidimensional class.	Deindustrialization, financialization, knowledge economy, union decline.	Democratic professionals + lower-income groups; Republican noncollege + business conservatives.	Education and occupation cross-cut income.	Organized labor remains institutionally Democratic.
15	Both parties increasingly use industrial policy, but for different purposes and constituencies.	National capacity and strategic competition.	China competition and supply-chain shocks.	Manufacturing, technology, climate and national-security constituencies.	Convergence in instruments masks divergence in climate, labor and trade design.	Major departure from 1990s neoliberal orthodoxy.
16	Republican trade policy has moved farthest from Reagan-era orthodoxy.	Economic nationalism and reciprocity.	Post-China-shock politics and Trump-era protectionism.	Manufacturing-oriented and nationalist constituencies.	Tariffs become tools of industrial and geopolitical policy.	Market conservatives remain skeptical of broad protectionism.
17	Democratic foreign policy remains more consistently alliance-centered.	Liberal internationalism and institutionalized cooperation.	FDR/Truman postwar order and Cold War alliance system.	Foreign-policy establishment, internationalists, many professionals.	NATO and alliances are treated as force multipliers.	Progressive restraint factions remain important.
18	Republican foreign policy is internally divided between internationalism, nationalism and restraint.	Primacy, sovereignty and burden-sharing compete.	Reaganism, Iraq backlash and America First.	Hawks, conventional national-security conservatives, America First and restraint groups.	Within-party differences can be as important as between-party differences.	China competition is a major area of cross-faction agreement.
19	Partisan media systems are asymmetric but not sealed.	Institutional trust and counter-establishment identity.	Talk radio, cable fragmentation and digital platforms.	Republicans heavily concentrated around Fox; Democrats use a broader set of legacy/public outlets.	Selective exposure reinforces identity and elite cues.	Substantial cross-use exists; experiments do not support a simple algorithm-causes-polarization theory.
20	Polarization increasingly involves social identity as well as policy.	Negative partisanship and identity sorting.	Racial, religious, ideological and geographic nationalization.	Both partisan coalitions.	Opposition to the other party raises the cost of compromise.	Most citizens still hold mixed issue bundles; polarization is not complete ideological uniformity.

Evidence anchors, propositions 11-20: 2024 Democratic and Republican platforms; Pew immigration, institutional-trust, media and typology studies; Bawn et al. (2012); Iyengar et al. (2019); Nyhan et al. (2023); contemporary trade, executive and national-security documents. Full references and evidence ladders: Appendices A-D/F.

The Deepest Differences - Initial Answers

Philosophical

ANALYTICAL INFERENCE The deepest philosophical difference concerns how liberty, equality and legitimate authority should be ordered when they conflict. Democrats more often connect liberty to equal participation and protection from discrimination; Republicans more often stress noninterference, property, religious autonomy and inherited constitutional rights.

Sociological

EMPIRICAL FINDING Education, religion, race and geography now align with partisanship more strongly than in much of the mid-20th century. The important development is not any single cleavage but the stacking of several cleavages in the same individuals and communities.

Political-economic

ANALYTICAL INFERENCE The parties increasingly disagree about which capitalism the United States should operate: more regulated and redistributive developmental capitalism on the Democratic side, versus lower-tax market capitalism increasingly combined with tariffs and national-development tools on the Republican side.

Cultural / institutional

SCHOLARLY INTERPRETATION The cultural conflict concerns the legitimacy and pace of social transformation; the institutional conflict concerns which authorities - experts, courts, executives, states, parents, religious institutions and local communities - may legitimately direct that change.

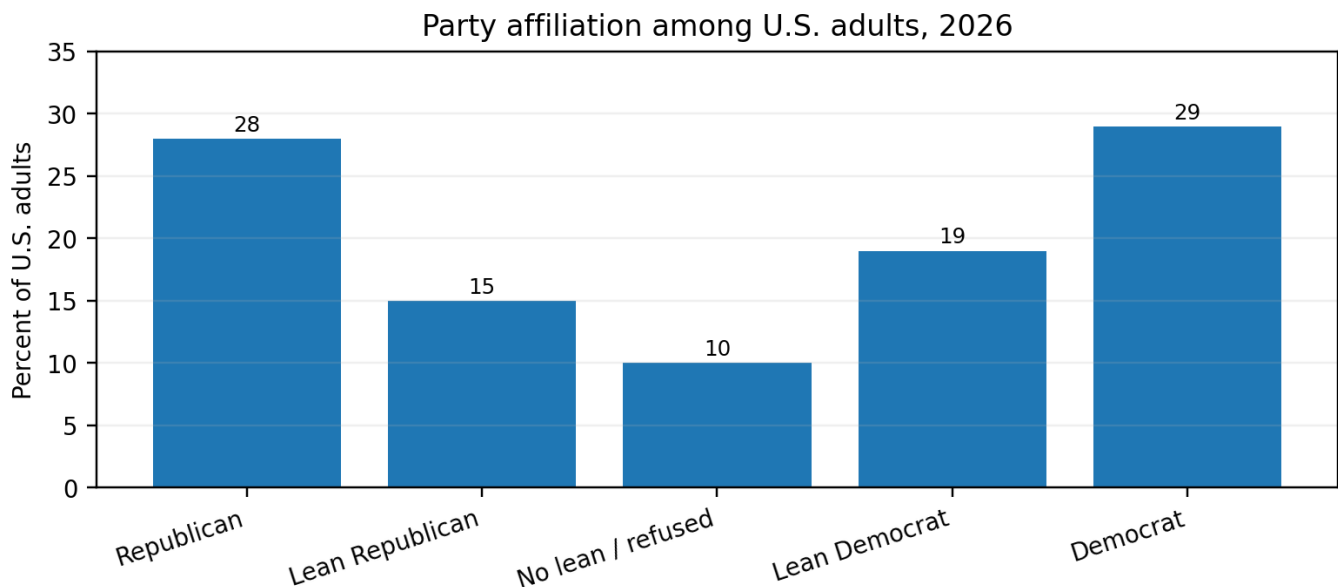


Figure 1. affiliation among U.S. adults, 2026.

Source and measurement. Pew Research Center, National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS), Jan. 30-June 18, 2026, N=5,511 U.S. adults. Party identification and partisan leaning are distinct measures; the chart does not represent vote choice. Pew Research Center (2026a).

I. Research Cutoff and Methodology

Research cutoff: September 7, 2026

The analysis distinguishes party identification, party leaning, ideological self-description, presidential vote choice, congressional vote choice and turnout. These variables are related but not interchangeable. A party can gain votes in a single election without producing a durable change in partisan identity; turnout composition can change an election result even when relatively few voters switch directly between candidates.

Contemporary institutional context

As of the cutoff, Republicans hold 53 Senate seats; 45 senators are Democrats and two are independents who caucus organizationally with Democrats. The House reports 218 Republicans, 214 Democrats, one independent and two vacancies. These figures describe institutional control rather than the partisan composition of the American public.

Sources: U.S. Senate institutional data and House institutional listings, cutoff September 7, 2026.

Pew Research Center's 2026 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS), conducted January 30-June 18 among 5,511 U.S. adults, found 29% identifying as Democrats, 28% as Republicans, another 19% leaning Democratic and 15% leaning Republican. Including leaners, this produced a 47%-43% Democratic advantage in that particular benchmark survey. It is not a permanent equilibrium and not an election forecast.

Pew Research Center, National Public Opinion Reference Survey, 2026: NPORS methodology and results.

Units of analysis

Formal and elite levels

- presidential candidates and presidents
- congressional officeholders
- state and local officials
- national party committees
- campaign professionals and activists
- donors and PACs

Coalitional and mass levels

- organized interest groups
- intellectual and policy networks
- media ecosystems
- ordinary party identifiers
- party leaners and weak partisans
- actual voters and eligible nonvoters

This distinction is critical. Labor-union leadership may remain strongly Democratic while a significant fraction of union members vote Republican. Corporate PACs, executives and employees can display different contribution patterns. A progressive activist should not be treated as a typical Democratic identifier, and a MAGA activist should not be treated as a typical Republican identifier.

Principal data resources

Validated-voter methodology

EMPIRICAL FINDING Pew's 2024 validated-voter study surveyed 8,942 U.S. citizens age 18 and older and linked respondents to official state turnout records through voter files. The postelection ATP survey was conducted Nov. 12-17, 2024. This method improves measurement of turnout but remains survey-based for vote choice and subgroup attitudes (Pew Research Center 2025a).

ANES version control

The ANES 2024 Time Series dataset used as the contemporary benchmark is the May 19, 2026 re-release, which corrected a set of variables affected by randomization and coding errors. Scholarly claims should therefore identify dataset versions rather than treating public-use files as timeless (ANES 2026).

CES scale and subgroup analysis

The Cooperative Election Study's 2024 Common Content includes roughly 60,000 adults, allowing finer analysis of smaller racial, occupational, religious and geographic subgroups than is possible in a typical national survey. Large N does not eliminate measurement error, but it materially improves precision for interaction analyses (Schaffner et al. 2025).

American National Election Studies (ANES). The ANES 2024 Time Series continues a series extending to 1948. Its full 2024 release contains 5,521 respondents and includes a 2016-2020-2024 panel component, allowing longitudinal analysis of party identification, ideology, racial attitudes, governmental attitudes, candidate evaluations and democratic norms.

ANES 2024 Time Series Study.

Cooperative Election Study (CES). The 2024 Common Content includes approximately 60,000 adults and voter-file validation. Its much larger sample is especially useful for subgroup analysis.

Cooperative Election Study Common Content, 2024.

Pew validated-voter studies. These link survey respondents to official state turnout records, permitting analysis of validated voters rather than only self-reported participation. **NPORS** provides an address-based probability benchmark for party affiliation among adults.

Table 2

Measurement distinctions

Concept	Meaning	Why it must remain distinct
Party identification	Psychological or social attachment to a party	Can persist even when a voter crosses party lines.
Party leaning	Directional affinity among independents or others	Many self-described independents behave as reliable partisan leaners.
Ideology	Self-described or issue-derived liberalism, conservatism or another worldview	Not all Democrats are liberals and not all Republicans are consistent conservatives.
Vote choice	Support for a specific candidate in a specific election	Candidate and turnout effects can produce short-run movement.
Turnout	Whether an eligible citizen actually votes	Coalition preferences become electorally consequential only when translated into participation.

Evidence hierarchy and replication discipline

ANALYTICAL INFERENCE Evidence is weighted according to what the claim requires. Statutes, roll calls, judicial opinions, executive orders, official party platforms and administrative documents are preferred for statements about governing behavior. ANES, CES, Pew, Gallup and validated-voter studies are preferred for mass opinion and electoral coalitions. Peer-reviewed work and university-press monographs are used to adjudicate mechanisms and historical interpretation. Think-tank analysis is used principally for policy detail and competing interpretation rather than treated as equivalent to peer review.

The report does not infer durable realignment from a single election. A movement is treated as structurally meaningful only when it appears across multiple elections, party identification, turnout behavior, or multiple independent datasets. Candidate-specific, period-specific and turnout-specific explanations are considered before a realignment claim is accepted (Key 1955; Burnham 1970; Sundquist 1983; Mayhew 2002; Schickler 2016).

Survey-comparison protocol

- Percentages from different question wordings are not treated as identical measures.
- Registered voters, likely voters, validated voters, U.S. adults and eligible citizens are explicitly distinguished.

- Subgroup estimates with small samples are interpreted cautiously; the 2026 NPORS, for example, warns that estimates for men and women under 30 have larger margins of error (Pew Research Center 2026a).
- Validated turnout is preferred to self-reported turnout when the research question concerns who actually voted.
- Party identification, partisan leaning and ideological self-identification are never used interchangeably.

Research cutoff: September 7, 2026. Current institutional composition is checked against official congressional sources. The Senate listed 53 Republicans, 45 Democrats and two independents caucusing with Democrats as of July 14, 2026; the House Radio-TV Gallery listed 218 Republicans, 214 Democrats, one independent and two vacancies, last updated Sept. 2, 2026 (U.S. Senate 2026; U.S. House 2026).

II. Major Interpretive Traditions in the Literature

Parties as electoral organizations

Classical electoral theories emphasize politicians' incentives to assemble majority coalitions by repositioning, packaging issues and mobilizing supporters. This remains indispensable, but cannot by itself explain why parties sometimes adopt policies that are costly electorally or strongly responsive to organized minorities.

Parties as coalitions of policy demanders

Kathleen Bawn, Martin Cohen, David Karol, Seth Masket, Hans Noel and John Zaller treat parties as coalitions of organized groups and activists that seek policy benefits and screen candidates. This framework directs attention beyond party committees to unions, evangelical organizations, business networks, environmental groups, gun-rights organizations, donors, think tanks and policy intellectuals.

Bawn et al., "A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands, and Nominations in American Politics," Perspectives on Politics 10(3), 2012.

Ideological asymmetry

Matt Grossmann and David Hopkins argue that Republicans historically developed more strongly as the political vehicle of an ideological conservative movement, while Democrats operated more as a coalition of social groups seeking distinct forms of governmental action. The thesis remains useful, but contemporary Democratic progressivism is more ideologically organized and contemporary Republican populism has weakened some older conservative commitments, including free trade, corporate deference and alliance internationalism.

Racial realignment

Eric Schickler's work is a major corrective to the popular one-date "party switch" narrative. Northern Democratic organizations increasingly incorporated African American voters, organized labor and civil-rights liberals during the New Deal and wartime periods. By the mid-1940s, northern Democratic congressional actors had moved ahead of northern Republicans as institutional advocates of major civil-rights initiatives. The 1960s civil-rights revolution accelerated and nationalized a transformation already underway.

Affective polarization

Affective-polarization research distinguishes ideological disagreement from social dislike. Iyengar, Leikes, Levendusky, Malhotra and Westwood conceptualize modern partisan hostility as a form of social identity. Citizens can become more negative toward opponents without becoming equally more coherent in policy ideology.

6. Sorting, issue evolution and coalition change

SCHOLARLY INTERPRETATION Carmines and Stimson's theory of issue evolution explains how a new issue can gradually reorganize partisan conflict as elites polarize, voters learn party differences and social groups migrate. Race is the canonical American case. This approach is compatible with Schickler's organizational account but emphasizes elite signaling and mass sorting (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Schickler 2016).

7. Class, geography and political economy

Research on inequality and representation shows that class politics cannot be inferred from electoral rhetoric alone. Affluent citizens have greater policy influence on many issues, yet voting coalitions are shaped by education, geography and identity as well as income (Bartels 2016; Gilens 2012; Page, Bartels and Seawright 2013). Rodden's work shows how the geographic concentration of left-leaning voters in dense cities interacts with single-member districts, while Nall traces the political consequences of metropolitan development and highways (Rodden 2019; Nall 2018).

8. Nationalization and place

Hopkins argues that American politics has become increasingly nationalized: local electoral variation and local information environments have weakened as national party identities absorb formerly local disputes. This helps explain why cultural and presidential politics increasingly structure state and congressional contests (Hopkins 2018).

9. Identity and status

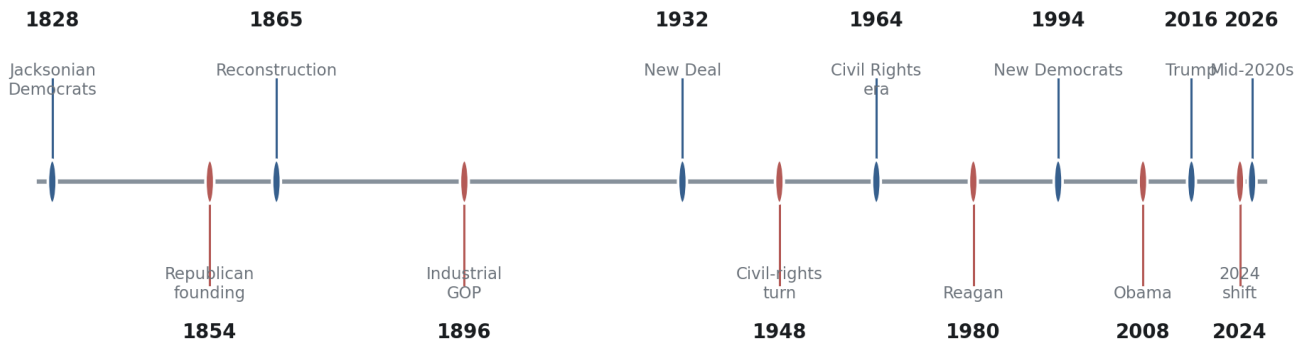
Mason emphasizes the consequences of partisan identities becoming socially aligned with race, religion and ideology: when identities stack, partisanship becomes a stronger social identity even without perfectly coherent issue beliefs. Competing work stresses racial attitudes, status threat and policy-specific mechanisms rather than a unitary identity process (Mason 2018; Sides, Tesler and Vavreck 2018; Mutz 2018).

10. Information systems

Media research distinguishes selective exposure, partisan persuasion, agenda setting and network structure. Prior demonstrates how greater media choice can polarize politically attentive audiences; Iyengar and Hahn document selective exposure; Benkler, Faris and Roberts identify asymmetries in online media networks; and large platform experiments caution that reducing like-minded exposure alone does not necessarily reduce affective polarization (Prior 2007; Iyengar and Hahn 2009; Benkler, Faris and Roberts 2018; Nyhan et al. 2023).

III. Historical Genealogy of the Two-Party System

PARTY DEVELOPMENT: REALIGNMENT + SORTING + COALITION RECONSTRUCTION



Organizational continuity does not imply ideological continuity.

Figure 2. Party development is better understood as overlapping realignments, sorting processes and coalition reconstruction than as one total switch.

The first analytical rule

There is no timeless Democratic ideology and no timeless Republican ideology. The Democratic Party of Andrew Jackson, Franklin Roosevelt and the mid-2020s is organizationally connected but not ideologically identical. The Republican Party of Reconstruction, William McKinley, Ronald Reagan and Donald Trump is likewise historically continuous as an institution but substantially transformed in coalition and doctrine.

Jacksonian formation

The recognizable Democratic Party emerged in the Jacksonian period. Its early politics combined mass White male democratic mobilization, hostility to concentrated financial privilege, limited-government traditions, territorial expansion, southern slavery and immigrant urban constituencies. No twenty-first-century left-right vocabulary adequately describes this coalition.

Republican founding

The Republican Party formed in the 1850s principally around opposition to the territorial expansion of slavery. Its early coalition included former Whigs, Free Soilers, antislavery Democrats and other northern constituencies. Republican economic development policy involved tariffs, infrastructure and national market-building, complicating any attempt to project modern libertarianism backward.

Civil War and Reconstruction

Republican governance during and after the Civil War produced emancipation, the Reconstruction Amendments, federal intervention to protect civil and political rights and expansion of national administrative capacity. Southern Democrats became principal political representatives of the post-Reconstruction White southern order. This period alone demonstrates why "Republican = states' rights" cannot be projected backward across American history.

Gilded Age

Republicans were disproportionately associated with northern industry, protective tariffs, Union veterans and commercial expansion. Democrats combined the Solid South, immigrant urban machines, agrarian interests and lower-tariff constituencies. Party conflict involved economics, ethnicity, religion and sectional memory more than contemporary ideology.

Progressive Era

Progressivism crossed party boundaries. Theodore Roosevelt represented an important Republican progressive current; Woodrow Wilson embodied Democratic progressive economic reform while maintaining deeply conservative racial views. Early twentieth-century "progressive" cannot simply be equated with the modern Democratic coalition.

New Deal transformation

Franklin Roosevelt reorganized national conflict around economic security, labor, social insurance and federal administrative capacity. The Democratic coalition came to combine industrial labor, northern urban ethnics, farmers, southern Whites, emerging Black Democratic voters, intellectuals and liberal reformers. Its contradiction was profound: southern segregationists and northern civil-rights liberals inhabited the same party.

Civil rights and southern realignment

Civil-rights policy, Black partisan alignment, White southern alignment, regional identity, religious conservatism and national enforcement of equality changed substantially over the twentieth century. The process operated through voters, organizations, state parties, congressional politicians and national parties rather than one presidential decision. Black voters moved decisively toward Democrats; White southern conservatives moved gradually and eventually overwhelmingly toward Republicans.

Reagan fusion

Reagan-era Republicanism joined market conservatives, social conservatives and national-security conservatives. Tax reduction, deregulation, social traditionalism and anti-communist internationalism could coexist because each faction obtained central objectives through the same Republican coalition.

Clinton and the New Democrats

Clinton-era Democrats partially accommodated the market-oriented environment produced by Reagan-era politics. Fiscal restraint, free trade, welfare reform, financial liberalization and market-compatible social policy reduced some economic distance between party establishments during the 1990s while preserving important differences over labor and social insurance.

Obama-era sorting

The Obama coalition strengthened Democratic support among Black voters, younger voters, highly educated voters, metropolitan voters, racial minorities and social liberals. Republican support simultaneously strengthened among many White noncollege and culturally conservative constituencies.

Trump-era transformation

Trump altered the hierarchy of Republican commitments. Free trade, immigration liberalization, corporate deference and automatic support for international commitments became less central. Tariffs, border sovereignty, manufacturing, national industrial capacity, cultural conflict and executive-centered leadership became more salient.

Biden-era and post-Biden Democratic economics

Recent Democratic economic policy moved away from Clinton-era orthodoxy in important respects: industrial strategy, supply-chain resilience, clean-energy subsidies, infrastructure investment, antitrust revival and pro-union policy. The party remained market-based, but the model of capitalism shifted toward a more developmental and strategically interventionist form.

Mid-2020s politics

The second Trump administration further demonstrates that contemporary Republicanism cannot be accurately summarized as "small government." Tax reduction and regulatory retrenchment coexist with extensive tariffs, immigration enforcement, defense and homeland-security priorities, and selective use of federal executive power.

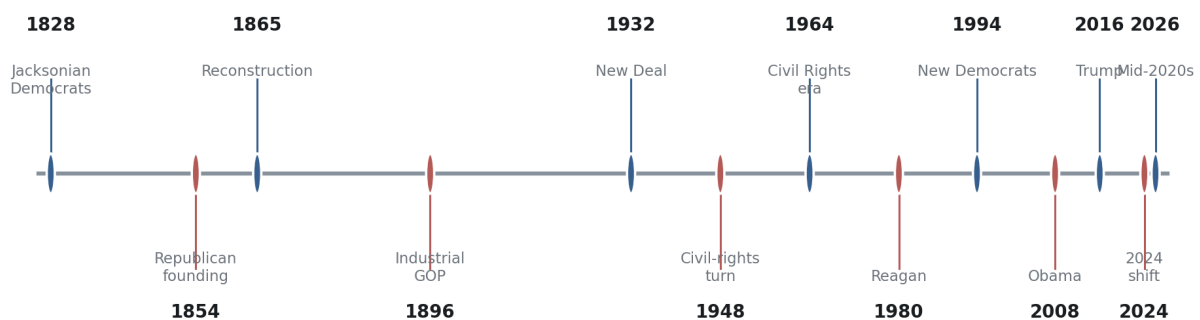
Did the parties "switch sides"?

Realignment versus sorting: an analytical test

SCHOLARLY INTERPRETATION "Realignment" is strongest when new groups enter or leave a party coalition, issue structures change and electoral loyalties persist. "Sorting" is strongest when voters bring their party identification into closer alignment with preexisting ideology or social identity. Southern White movement toward Republicans involved both: presidential voting moved before complete down-ballot party identification, while national elites simultaneously clarified civil-rights positions (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Black and Black 2002; Schickler 2016).

ANALYTICAL INFERENCE The most defensible account therefore rejects both extremes: neither "nothing switched" nor "the parties simply exchanged identities" is historically adequate. The modern system emerged through several overlapping transformations in race, economics, religion, geography and ideology, each proceeding on a different timetable.

PARTY DEVELOPMENT: REALIGNMENT + SORTING + COALITION RECONSTRUCTION



Organizational continuity does not imply ideological continuity.

Figure 3. Realignment is better modeled as overlapping transformations rather than a single switch.

Table 3

Domain	What genuinely changed	Why a simple switch is inadequate
Slavery	Republicans originated in opposition to slavery's territorial expansion; antebellum southern Democrats defended slavery.	Later party positions cannot be inferred mechanically from Civil War-era identities.
Reconstruction	Republicans supported Reconstruction constitutionalism; southern Democrats resisted it.	Modern federalism rhetoric follows a different historical path.

Table 3 (continued)

Domain	What genuinely changed	Why a simple switch is inadequate
Black voting	Black voters shifted toward Democrats beginning in the New Deal era and consolidated later.	The shift preceded the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
Civil rights	Northern and national Democrats moved increasingly toward civil-rights liberalism.	Change was gradual and regionally uneven.
Southern Whites	Moved gradually toward Republicans, first heavily at the presidential level and later down-ballot.	The process unfolded over decades.
Federal power	Purposes and coalitions changed.	Neither party simply exchanged one stable doctrine of centralization.
Economics	Democrats institutionalized welfare-state liberalism; Republicans became the principal market-conservative party.	Economic realignment followed a different chronology from racial change.
Religion	Evangelical and social-conservative Christians increasingly entered the Republican coalition in the late twentieth century.	This alignment is much newer than the parties themselves.
Immigration	Both parties experienced multiple reversals and factional disputes.	Today's alignment is historically recent.
Foreign policy	Neither party has maintained one continuous doctrine.	Internationalism, restraint and nationalism crossed party lines at different times.

The best formulation is: **the United States experienced several overlapping realignments and decades of ideological sorting rather than one total Democratic-Republican identity exchange.**

Period-by-period coalition audit

Period	Democratic coalition	Republican coalition	Economic axis	Race / region	Federal power	Foreign-policy tendency
1828-1850s	Jacksonian farmers, southern planters, immigrants, urban machines	Not yet formed; Whigs are principal rival	Anti-bank/localist Democratic tradition	Sectional tensions increasingly dominant	Democratic suspicion of federal economic activism	Expansionism and continental questions
1854-1877	Southern and northern Democratic opposition coalition	Antislavery-extension coalition; Union; Reconstruction	Republican developmental state	Slavery, Union and Reconstruction central	Republicans deploy strong national power for Reconstruction	War, reconstruction and continental development
1877-1896	Solid South + urban immigrants + agrarian currents	Northern industry, veterans, tariff interests	Tariff/monetary conflict	Sectional memory remains strong	Less ideologically nationalized than today	Limited but expanding global role
1896-1932	Southern, urban and progressive factions	Business/industry plus progressive Republican wing	Industrial capitalism and reform	Jim Crow South Democratic	Progressivism crosses parties	Imperial, internationalist and isolationist currents cross-cut parties
1932-1964	New Deal labor, urban ethnics, South, increasingly Black voters	Business conservatives, many northern/suburban voters	Welfare-state realignment	Democratic racial contradiction intensifies	Democratic national-state capacity expands	Internationalism becomes bipartisan establishment position after WWII
1964-1980	Civil-rights liberalism + labor + minorities; southern conservatives erode	Suburban, Sun Belt, emerging southern and religious conservatives	Welfare-state conflict plus inflation/tax politics	Southern sorting accelerates	Rights and regulation nationalize conflict	Vietnam divides both parties
1980-2008	Labor/minorities + increasingly social liberals; Clintonian market accommodation	Reagan fusion of market, social and national-security conservatives	Tax/deregulation/free-trade consensus with partisan differences	South largely Republican at presidential level	Conservative anti-regulatory state discourse	GOP hawkish internationalism; Democratic liberal internationalism
2008-2016	Obama multiracial, young, metropolitan, college coalition	Tea Party, White noncollege, rural, evangelical coalition	Post-crisis regulation; austerity debates	Education and geography gain salience	ACA and administrative-state conflict	War fatigue rises across both parties
2016-2026	Professional-metropolitan + minority + lower-income coalition; industrial-policy turn	MAGA/national-conservative + noncollege + rural + traditional business coalition	Competing developmental capitalisms; tariffs return	Republican minority gains complicate racial binary	Selective state capacity and executive-control conflict	Democratic alliance internationalism versus internally divided GOP

Interpretive anchors: Sundquist 1983; Carmines and Stimson 1989; Black and Black 2002; Schickler 2016; Noel 2013; Hopkins 2018.

IV. Ideological and Philosophical Foundations

Democratic intellectual traditions

- **Modern liberalism:** capitalist markets combined with regulation, social insurance and civil rights.
- **Progressivism:** stronger concern with inequality, labor power, corporate concentration, climate and public investment.
- **Social democracy:** a larger welfare state and stronger labor institutions, though usually less extensive than European social democracy.
- **Civil-rights liberalism:** equal citizenship, anti-discrimination and federal enforcement.
- **Technocratic liberalism:** expertise, administrative capacity and evidence-oriented governance.
- **Pluralist/multicultural liberalism:** social diversity as a legitimate feature of national identity.

Republican intellectual traditions

- **Classical-market liberalism:** low taxes, property, deregulation and entrepreneurship.
- **Traditional conservatism:** continuity, inheritance and skepticism toward rapid change.
- **Religious conservatism:** moral order, religious liberty, abortion restrictions and family norms.
- **Libertarianism:** markets and personal liberty.
- **Reagan fusionism:** markets + social conservatism + military internationalism.
- **Neoconservatism:** strong military power and international activism.
- **Populism / national conservatism / America First:** sovereignty, border control, industrial capacity and skepticism toward elite institutions or open-ended commitments.

The central Republican intellectual transformation since 2015 has been the weakening of the assumption that these traditions necessarily yield the same policy package. Democratic traditions are equally heterogeneous; the beliefs of activists and policy intellectuals are generally more ideologically coherent than those of ordinary identifiers.

Table 4

Philosophical vocabulary

Concept	Democratic tendency	Republican tendency
Liberty	Effective autonomy + civil liberties + equal participation	Protection against coercion + traditional constitutional liberties
Equality	Equal citizenship plus attention to substantive barriers	Formal equality and individual treatment
Justice	Correction of institutional disadvantage	Rule consistency, desert and individual responsibility
Fairness	Opportunity structures and distributive effects	Reciprocity and procedural neutrality
Rights	Civil, privacy, equality and participatory rights	Speech, religion, property, gun and associational rights
Responsibility	Individual + social/institutional	Individual, familial and communal
Authority	Legitimate when professional and democratically accountable	Legitimate when constitutionally bounded and socially rooted
Tradition	Revisable	Presumptively valuable
Progress	Often achievable through reform	Viewed with greater skepticism
Community	Pluralist and interdependent	Local, familial, religious and national
Nation	Civic and pluralistic	Civic but often culturally thicker
Merit	Valid but structurally conditioned	Central distributive principle
Solidarity	Wider public role	Family/local/national forms
Property	Right constrained by public regulation	Stronger presumptive right
Opportunity	Requires correcting barriers	Requires neutral rules and open institutions

These are modal tendencies, not categorical doctrines. The analytically important question is often not which party values a concept, but what each coalition means by the concept when values collide.

V. Competing Conceptions of America

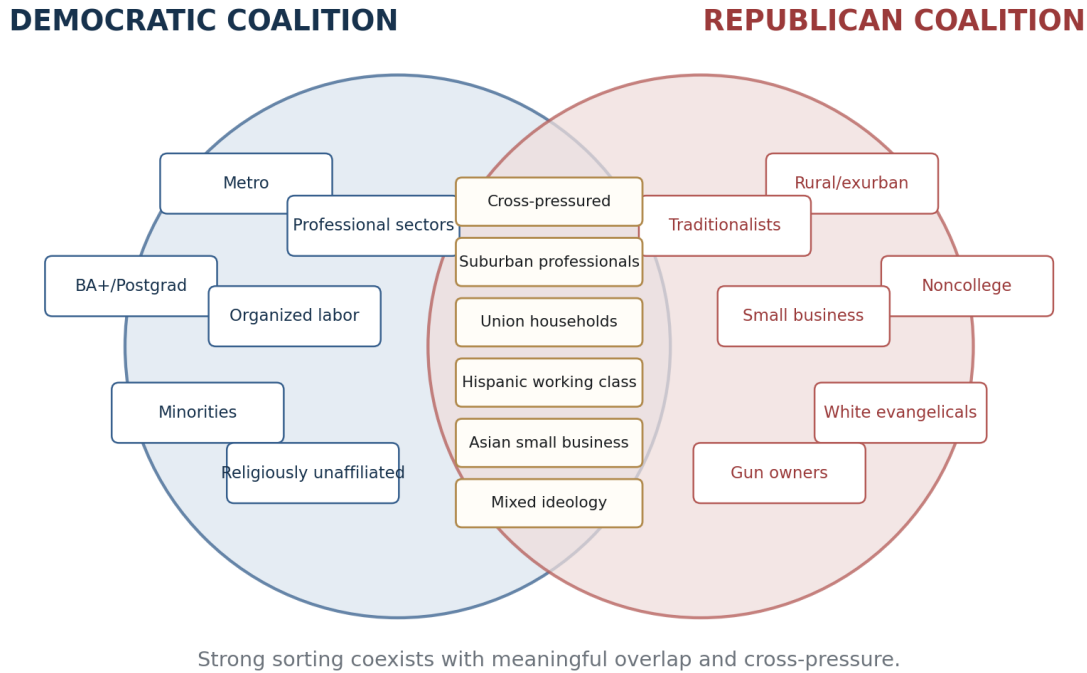


Figure 4. nter overlap is not noise: cross-pressured groups and mixed-ideology partisans are essential to coalition change.

Democratic normative model

The contemporary Democratic center imagines a society in which capitalism produces growth but is politically regulated; citizenship is independent of race, religion, sexuality or ancestry; public institutions compensate for unequal starting conditions; professional expertise has a legitimate role in complex governance; national authority protects civil rights; social diversity is a legitimate feature of national identity; and international alliances can increase U.S. capacity.

Republican normative model

The contemporary Republican center increasingly imagines a society in which markets and property remain primary economic institutions; family and civil society bear greater social responsibility; public authority protects order, borders and sovereignty; inherited cultural institutions deserve protection from progressive institutional power; bureaucratic discretion is constrained; citizenship entails stronger membership and reciprocity; and economic policy protects strategic national capacity.

Neither model corresponds perfectly to actual governing behavior. Each coalition contains factions whose economic, cultural and institutional preferences pull in different directions.

VI. The State, Government and Federalism

Beyond "big government vs. small government"

Survey evidence supports a real symbolic difference: Democratic identifiers are more likely to favor a larger government providing more services. But Americans across party lines also express strong support for particular large programs such as Social Security. The symbolic concept of "government" is therefore more polarized than every government function considered separately.

Republican governments may support extensive public power for immigration enforcement, policing, defense, tariffs, industrial security, abortion regulation, education policy and executive control. Democratic governments frequently pursue public purposes through tax expenditures, regulated private insurance, private contractors, subsidized clean-energy investment and public-private partnerships.

The deeper cleavage is not simply **how much government**, but **government doing what, through which institution, to whom, and according to which conception of legitimate authority**.

Federalism and selective centralization

Neither contemporary coalition consistently applies a single principle of decentralization. Democrats often favor national power when civil rights, environmental standards, healthcare or labor protections are at stake while preferring state experimentation in other domains. Republicans often invoke state autonomy in economic and regulatory disputes yet support strong federal action for immigration, national security, tariffs or selected cultural objectives. Federalism is therefore partly a substantive struggle over which level of government is most likely to protect each coalition's preferred rights and policies.

Administrative government

Democratic political networks generally place greater confidence in professional administration, scientific expertise and regulatory agencies. Republican networks are more skeptical of bureaucratic autonomy and increasingly favor stronger presidential direction over executive agencies. This creates an important paradox: contemporary populist conservatism can criticize the administrative state as unaccountable while simultaneously favoring a more politically controlled executive state.

VII. Political Economy and Competing Capitalisms

Two parties, more than two capitalisms

Mainstream Democrats and Republicans both operate within a predominantly capitalist framework. The disagreement increasingly concerns capitalism's institutional design rather than capitalism versus socialism. Democratic factions range from technocratic regulated capitalism to social-democratic and green-developmental models. Republican factions range from market conservatism to producer nationalism and national-development conservatism.

The return of tariffs represents an important break with late twentieth-century Republican free-trade orthodoxy. Conversely, contemporary Democratic acceptance of private ownership and market allocation invalidates the claim that mainstream Democratic economics is socialist.

Taxation

Democratic policy generally places greater emphasis on progressive income taxation, higher effective taxation of high-income households and corporations, refundable credits and using tax policy for social and climate objectives. Republican policy generally places greater emphasis on lower marginal rates, investment incentives, lower business taxation, estate-tax reduction and supply-side incentives.

Business

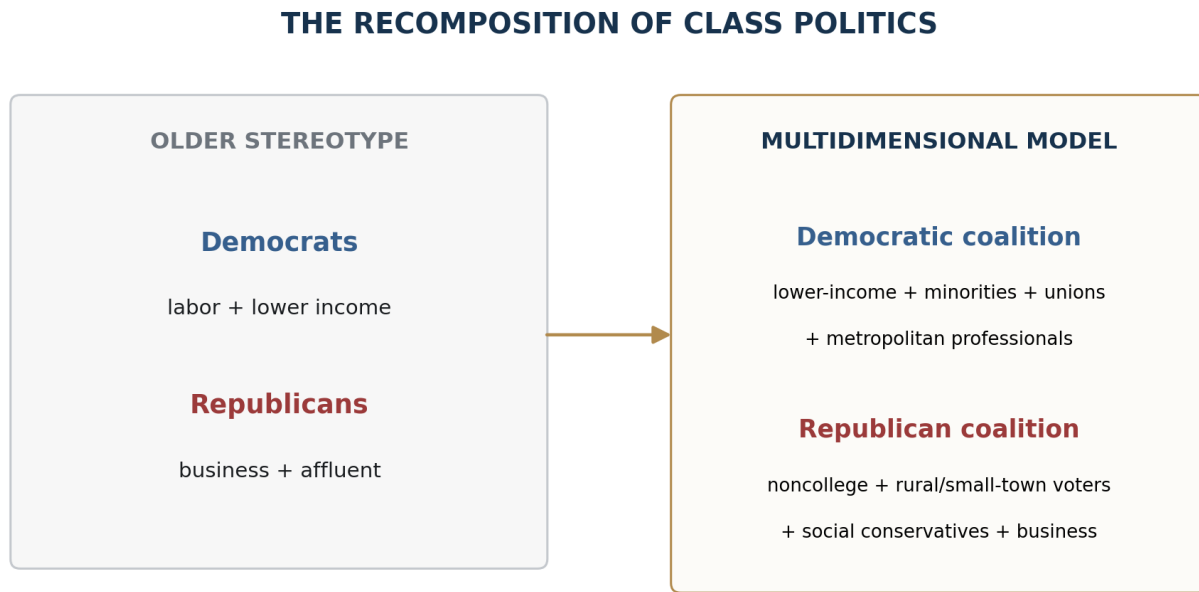
The proposition "Republicans are business; Democrats are anti-business" is obsolete. Political alignment varies by sector, occupation, management, geography, regulatory exposure and cultural identity. Technology and professional sectors have often leaned more Democratic in contribution patterns; oil and gas, agriculture and construction have leaned more Republican; finance and real estate are more mixed. Corporate PACs, executives, employees, shareholders and workers should never be treated as one political actor.

Labor

Organized labor remains institutionally Democratic because Democratic policy more frequently supports collective bargaining, union organizing, minimum wages and workplace protections. Yet union membership no longer guarantees Democratic voting, and Republicans have gained among some union and nonunion working-class voters.

Key distinction: labor institutions remain strongly Democratic; workers as a social class are politically divided.

The recomposition of class politics



Income alone cannot capture contemporary partisan class alignment.

Figure 5. Contemporary class politics is not a simple rich-poor reversal. Education, occupation, assets, employment relations and cultural capital cross-cut income.

The older stereotype - Democrats as labor and lower-income voters, Republicans as business and affluent voters - was never complete and is now especially misleading. Democratic coalitions combine many lower-income and minority constituencies with highly educated metropolitan professionals. Republican coalitions combine many noncollege and rural/small-town voters with traditional business and affluent constituencies. This is a coalition recomposition, not a simple class reversal.

Why income is inadequate

Dimension	What it captures	Why it matters politically
Income	Annual flow of economic resources	Can differ sharply from long-run status or assets.
Wealth	Assets minus liabilities	Homeownership and retirement assets create interests not visible in annual income.
Occupation	Position in production and professional hierarchies	Workplace authority, networks and professional culture affect politics.
Education	Credentials and associated networks	Closely associated with geography, occupation, social attitudes and institutional trust.
Employment relation	Owner, manager, salaried professional, hourly employee or contractor	Shapes risk, regulation exposure, bargaining power and entrepreneurial identity.

Contemporary Republican fiscal practice

The 2025 reconciliation legislation illustrates the coexistence of traditional Republican tax priorities with selective retrenchment of means-tested programs and substantial spending priorities in defense and homeland security. This governing combination again demonstrates why "small government" is not a sufficient description of contemporary Republican political economy.

See Congressional Budget Office, analyses of Public Law 119-21 and the 2025 reconciliation legislation.

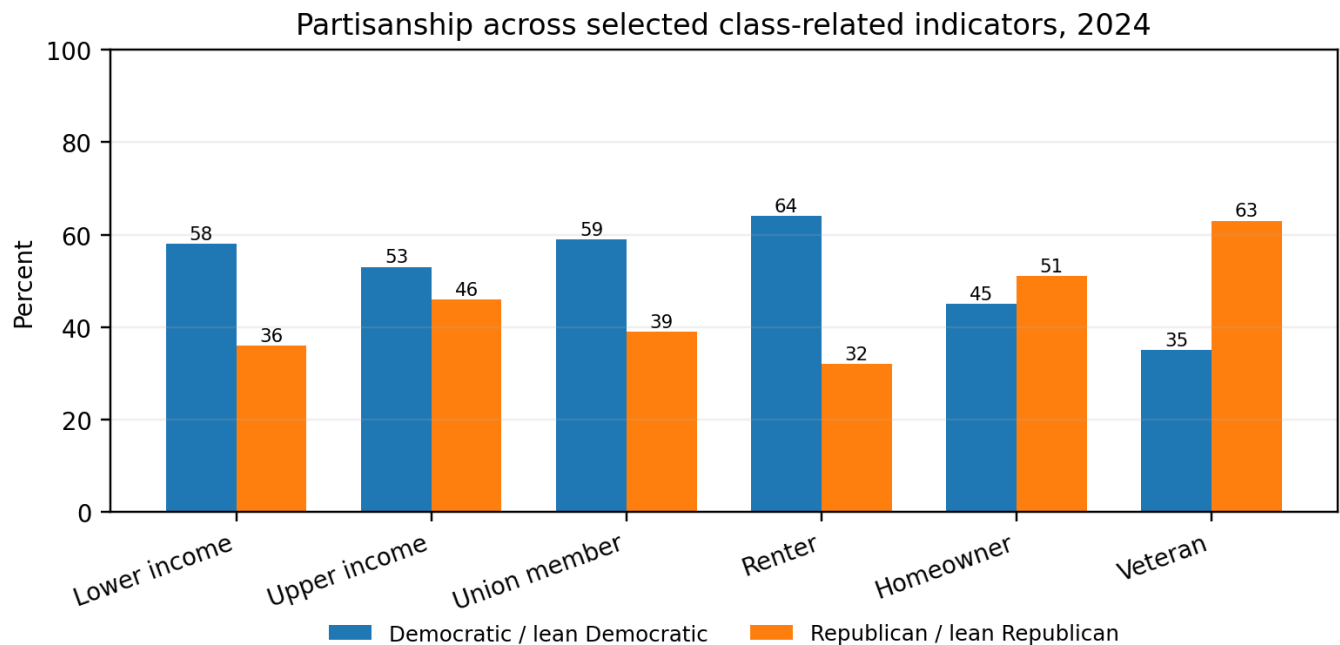


Figure 6. ed class-related indicators show why income alone cannot represent contemporary partisan class structure.

Source. Pew Research Center, *Changing Partisan Coalitions in a Politically Divided Nation*, registered voters, 2024 report drawing on 2019-2023 ATP data and longer telephone trends. Lower-income voters: 58% Democratic/36% Republican; upper-income: 53/46; union members: 59/39; renters: 64/32; homeowners: 45/51; veterans: 35/63 (Pew Research Center 2024d).

Political economy as a conflict among institutional models

ANALYTICAL INFERENCE The contemporary economic cleavage is no longer well represented by laissez-faire versus planning. A more accurate map contains at least four models: technocratic regulated capitalism, social-democratic capitalism, market conservatism and national-development conservatism. Democratic industrial policy is often tied to climate, labor standards and technology investment; Republican industrial policy is more likely to emphasize tariffs, domestic manufacturing, energy abundance, supply-chain sovereignty and national security.

2025 governing evidence

EMPIRICAL FINDING Public Law 119-21, enacted July 4, 2025, combined major tax changes with changes to Medicaid, SNAP, student-loan programs, defense, border security and other spending. CBO estimated that household resources would decrease toward the bottom of the income distribution and increase for households in the middle and toward the top; CBO separately estimated that the Medicaid provisions would increase the number of people without health insurance by 7.5 million in 2034 relative to baseline (Congress 2025; CBO 2025a, 2025b). These are distributional estimates, not moral evaluations.

EMPIRICAL FINDING The second Trump administration also employed broad tariff authority. An April 2025 executive action imposed an additional 10% ad valorem tariff on most imports, with additional country-specific rates, and subsequent proclamations applied sector-specific tariffs. This is strong evidence that contemporary Republican economic policy cannot be reduced to classical free trade (White House 2025a; White House 2026a).

VIII. Education and the Knowledge Class

Table 5

Educational polarization

Registered voter group	Republican / lean Republican	Democrat / lean Democratic
No BA	51%	45%
BA+	42%	55%
Postgraduate	37%	61%
White noncollege	63%	33%

Source: Pew Research Center, *Changing Partisan Coalitions in a Politically Divided Nation*, 2024.

Two decades earlier the pattern was substantially different: college graduates were more Republican and noncollege voters more Democratic than they are today. Education has therefore become a major axis of partisan sorting.

Education should not be interpreted as intelligence. College attendance changes occupational networks, residential geography, institutional exposure, professional incentives, social networks and cultural attitudes. Research increasingly finds education more consistently associated with socially liberal attitudes than with uniformly left-wing economic preferences.

Knowledge and professional classes

"Knowledge class," "professional-managerial class," "economic elite," "credentialed class" and "cultural elite" are not interchangeable. A hedge-fund manager, professor, physician, engineer and journalist may all be highly educated while occupying radically different positions with respect to property, income, markets, institutions and culture. The analytically useful variable is often institutional location rather than income alone.

Often Democratic-leaning

Academia, teaching, journalism, many legal professions, scientific occupations, civil administration and nonprofit policy work.

Mixed sectors

Medicine, engineering, consulting, management, entrepreneurship and finance.

Analytical caution

Occupation, ownership, income and credentials do not necessarily point in the same partisan direction.

2024 validated vote and education

2024 voter group	Trump	Harris
No four-year degree	56%	42%
Four-year degree or more	41%	57%
Rural	69%	29%
Urban	33%	65%

Source: Pew Research Center validated-voter analysis of the 2024 election.

The correct interpretation is educational sorting, not intellectual hierarchy. The noncollege Republican advantage and college Democratic advantage reflect social location, institutions and culture as well as economic experience.

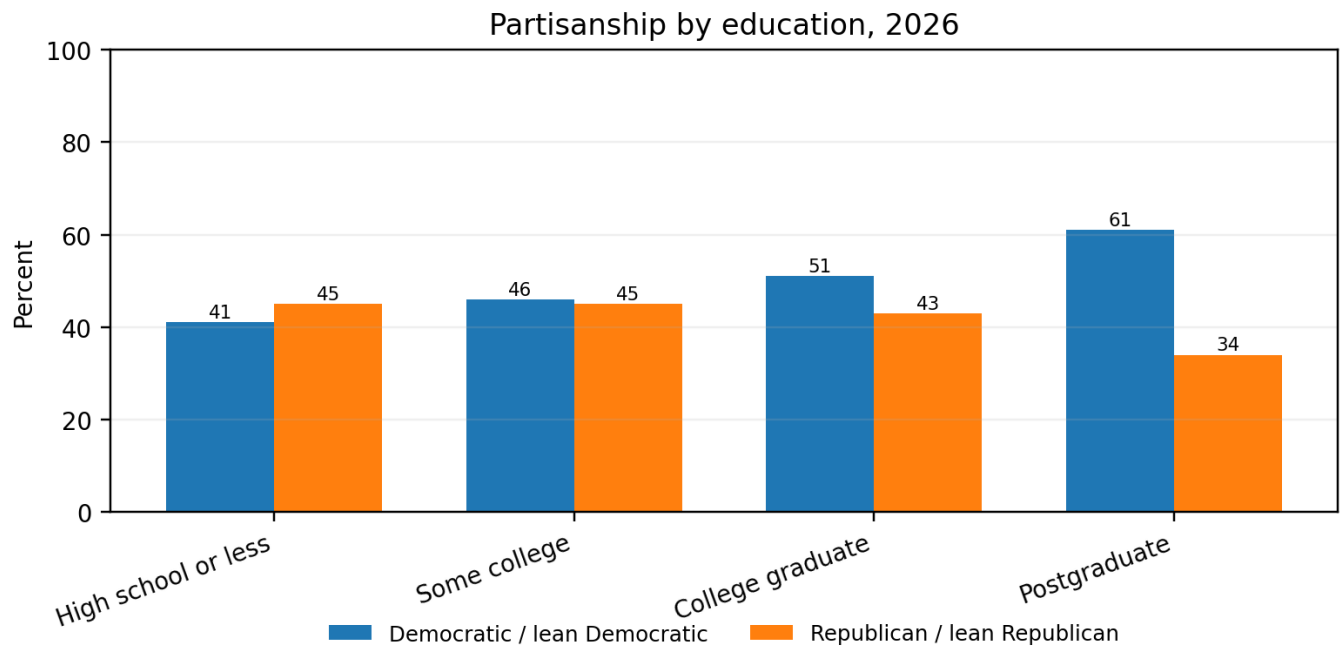


Figure 7. affiliation by four levels of education, 2026.

Source. Pew Research Center NPORS, Jan. 30-June 18, 2026, N=5,511 U.S. adults. High school or less: 41% Democratic/45% Republican; some college: 46/45; college graduate: 51/43; postgraduate: 61/34. "Some college" includes associate degrees and college attendance without a four-year degree (Pew Research Center 2026a).

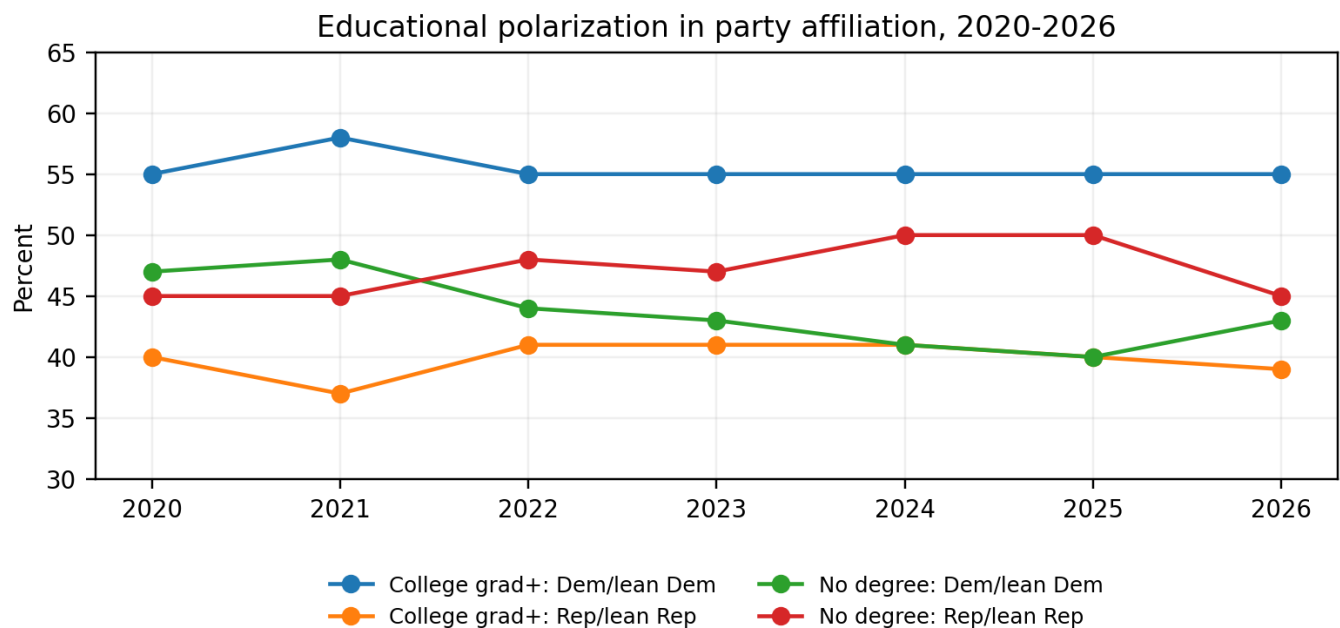


Figure 8. tional polarization in party affiliation, 2020-2026.

Method note. These are U.S. adult party-identification/leaning estimates from annual NPORS, not vote returns. The 2026 noncollege population was roughly evenly divided (45% Republican/43% Democratic), while college graduates remained Democratic-leaning (39%/55%). Year-to-year movement should not be overinterpreted.

Competing explanations for the diploma divide

The literature points to several mechanisms that can operate simultaneously. First, occupational sorting places graduates disproportionately in professional, public-sector and knowledge-intensive institutions. Second, geographic sorting places graduates in metropolitan areas where diversity and service-sector economies are more common. Third, education is associated more consistently with social liberalism than with uniformly left economic attitudes. Fourth, elite cues may create feedback: once parties become associated with education-linked cultural positions, educational identity itself can become politically salient (Campbell et al. 1960; Jessee 2026; Zingher 2026).

ANALYTICAL INFERENCE The diploma divide is therefore best understood as a social-location variable, not a measure of cognitive merit. It captures networks, occupations, residential environments, cultural capital and institutional trust that often move together.

IX. Race and Ethnicity

Coalition structure

The Democratic coalition remains much more racially diverse. Long-run Pew data show that the White share of Democratic identifiers and leaners declined substantially from the 1990s into the 2020s, while White voters remained a much larger share of the Republican coalition. Yet racial blocs must not be treated as fixed.

Pew's validated-voter analysis of 2024 found Harris winning Hispanic voters 51%-48% and Asian voters 57%-40%, while Trump received 15% of Black voters - higher than in 2020 - even as Democrats retained an overwhelming Black majority. White non-Hispanic voters fell from 88% of Trump's 2016 coalition to 78% in 2024, making the Republican coalition more racially diverse than in his earlier campaigns.

Pew Research Center, Behind Trump's 2024 Victory: A More Racially and Ethnically Diverse Voter Coalition, 2025.

This is a meaningful change but does not establish that racial realignment has disappeared. The better conclusion is a **loosening, rather than disappearance, of race-based partisan alignment**. Race interacts with gender, education, religion, generation, nativity, national origin and geography.

Why a single election does not establish realignment

Pew found comparatively few voters switching directly between the two major candidates across 2020 and 2024, while differences in participation were important to Republican gains. Election-result change must therefore be decomposed into persuasion, mobilization, demobilization and electorate composition. The 2026 NPORS benchmark subsequently found Democratic identification or leaning ahead overall among U.S. adults despite Republican electoral success in 2024.

Change in election results != change in party identification != permanent realignment.

Table 6

Competing approaches to racial equality

Question	Democratic tendency	Republican tendency
Model of discrimination	Institutional or systemic mechanisms can reproduce inequality	Focus on demonstrable individual discrimination
Equality standard	Formal equality plus structural opportunity	Equal rules and individual treatment
Affirmative action	More receptive under some conditions	Generally opposed
DEI	More supportive	More skeptical or restrictive
Civil-rights enforcement	Stronger national enforcement	Greater concern about race-conscious governmental action
Historical responsibility	Greater willingness to incorporate historical effects	Greater emphasis on present individual responsibility

The deeper philosophical conflict concerns the relevant unit of justice: individual neutrality versus individual rights interpreted within institutional and historical context.

Ethnic heterogeneity

Latino, Asian, Arab, Native American and other categories should be disaggregated whenever sample sizes permit. National origin, generation, religious practice, class, region and immigration history can produce large internal differences. "Hispanic voter" or "Asian voter" is often only the beginning of analysis, not its conclusion.

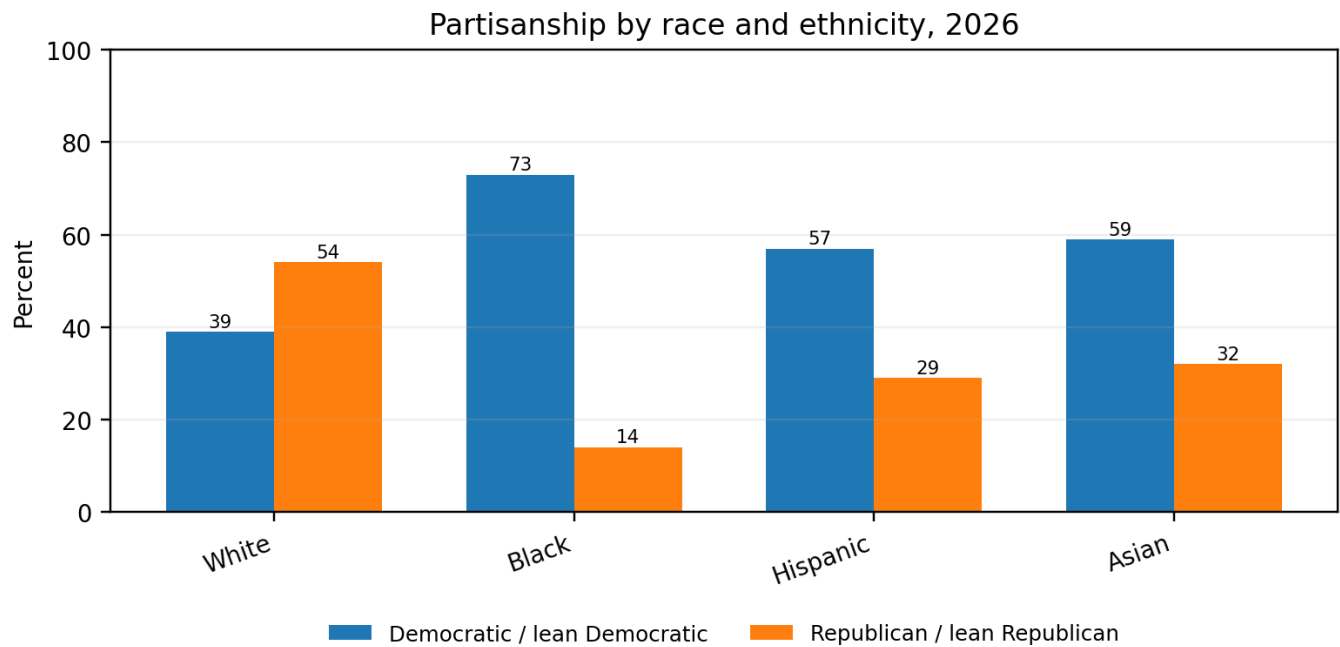


Figure 9. affiliation by race and ethnicity, 2026.

Source. Pew NPORS 2026, U.S. adults. White: 54% Republican/39% Democratic; Black: 14/73; Hispanic: 29/57; Asian: 32/59. Asian estimates represent English-speaking adults; White, Black and Asian categories are non-Hispanic and single-race in Pew's reporting (Pew Research Center 2026a).

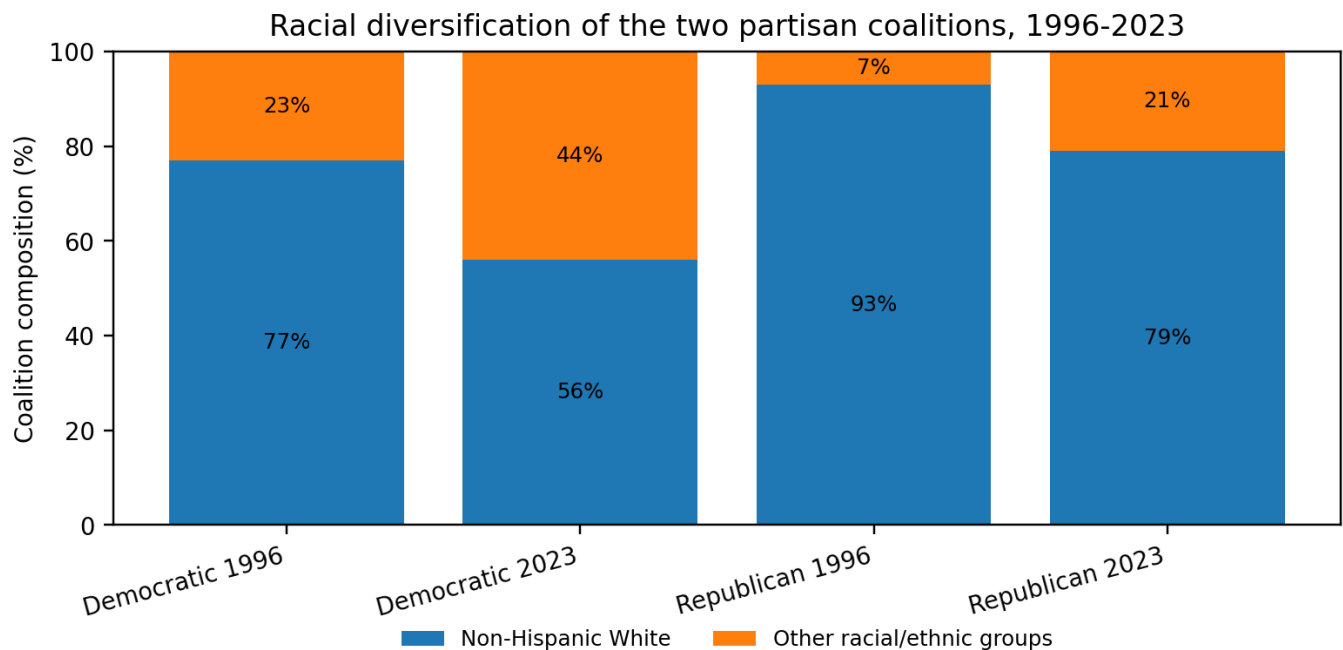


Figure 10. partisan coalitions diversified, but the Democratic coalition changed more.

Source. Pew 2024 coalition report. Non-Hispanic White voters declined from 77% to 56% of the Democratic coalition and from 93% to 79% of the Republican coalition between 1996 and 2023. The figure collapses all non-White categories solely to display coalition diversification; substantive analysis below keeps groups disaggregated (Pew Research Center 2024b).

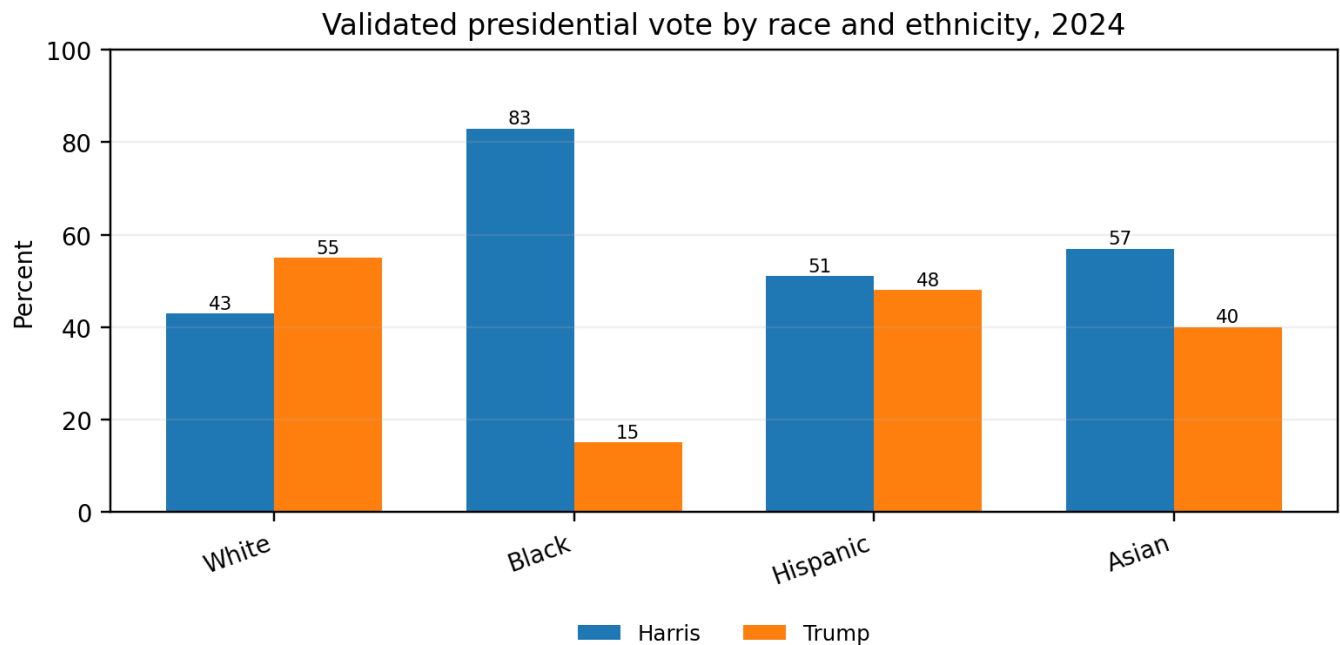


Figure 11. Validated 2024 presidential vote by race and ethnicity.

Source and population. Pew validated voters, postelection ATP Nov. 12-17, 2024, N=8,942 U.S. citizens surveyed; 7,100 classified as validated voters. Trump: White 55%, Black 15%, Hispanic 48%, Asian 40%; Harris: White approximately 43%, Black 83%, Hispanic 51%, Asian 57% (Pew Research Center 2025a, 2025b).

Disaggregation beyond pan-ethnic labels

SCHOLARLY INTERPRETATION Pan-ethnic categories are analytically useful for national coalition mapping but often conceal national-origin, nativity, religion and class differences. Latino politics varies among Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Central American and South American communities; Asian American politics differs across Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese and other national-origin groups. Electoral analysis should therefore treat "Hispanic" and "Asian" as high-level categories that require disaggregation whenever sample size permits (Abrajano and Hajnal 2015; Wong et al. 2011).

Native, Arab, Jewish and Muslim Americans

Native American voting varies sharply by tribe, state, reservation status and local political economy; national averages can be misleading. Arab American and Muslim politics have been shaped by immigration, civil-liberties concerns, Middle East policy and metropolitan concentration. Jewish Americans remain a strongly Democratic-leaning religious/ethnocultural constituency overall, while containing substantial Orthodox and conservative variation. These populations illustrate why race, ethnicity and religion should not be collapsed into one coalition variable (Pew Research Center 2024c; Barreto and Bozonelos 2009).

X. Religion, Gender, Family and Generation

Religious coalitions

Religion is one of the strongest contemporary cleavages, but "religious people Republican; secular people Democratic" is wrong. White evangelical Protestants and Latter-day Saints lean strongly Republican; Black Protestants remain heavily Democratic; Jewish, Muslim and religiously unaffiliated voters generally lean Democratic; and Catholic politics varies substantially by race, ethnicity, practice and geography.

In Pew's validated 2024 electorate, 81% of White evangelical Protestants voted Trump, 58% of White nonevangelical Protestants voted Trump, Trump won Catholics 55%-43%, and 70% of religiously unaffiliated voters voted Harris.

Source: Pew Research Center, *Voting Patterns in the 2024 Election*, 2025.

Religion in public life

The major conflict is not simply religion versus secularism. Republican arguments more often emphasize religious exemptions, parental authority, traditional moral norms and public religious expression. Democratic arguments more often emphasize church-state separation, nondiscrimination, pluralistic neutrality and individual autonomy. The parties therefore embody competing definitions of religious liberty and pluralism.

Table 7

Gender gap

2026 adult affiliation	GOP / lean GOP	Dem / lean Dem
Men	49%	43%
Women	38%	52%

Source: Pew Research Center, *Party Affiliation Fact Sheet (NPORS)*, 2026.

Gender effects interact strongly with marriage, age, education, race and religion. Younger adults have generally leaned Democratic, while the mid-2020s also show a notable young-male / young-female divergence. Whether that divergence becomes durable cannot yet be established.

Family politics

Republican voters are on average more likely to emphasize marriage, fertility, parental authority and traditional family institutions. Democratic voters are more likely to support publicly subsidized childcare, broader reproductive autonomy, recognition of diverse family structures and gender-role flexibility. Both coalitions nevertheless contain religious, pronatalist and economically family-oriented factions.

LGBT and gender politics

Same-sex marriage has become substantially more socially normalized than contemporary disputes over transgender medicine, school policy, athletics, pronouns, parental notification and religious exemptions. Public opinion is frequently less polarized than activist and elite discourse at the most visible edges of these debates.

Generational politics

Among adults born in the 2000s who were old enough to appear in Pew's 2026 benchmark, 56% identified as or leaned Democratic compared with 37% Republican. But cohort analysis must distinguish age effects, cohort effects and period effects. Young voters may change as they age; the parties may change; economic or geopolitical shocks may alter every generation simultaneously.

Turnout as a coalition mechanism

Validated-voter research shows a substantial educational turnout gradient. Among citizens eligible for the 2020, 2022 and 2024 elections, 54% of college graduates voted in all three compared with 35% of citizens without a college degree. Younger citizens were also substantially less likely than older citizens to vote consistently.

Coalition strength at the ballot box is a function of **preference x eligibility x registration x turnout**.

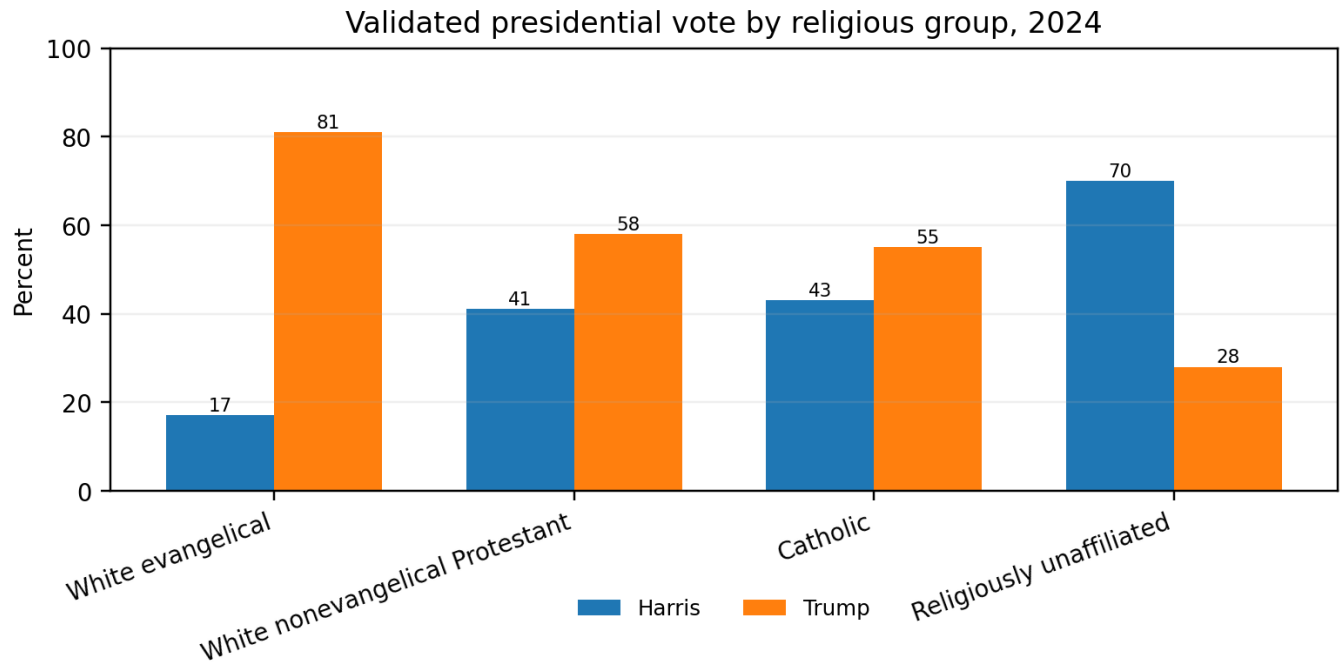


Figure 12. n remains a major cleavage, but religious tradition and race matter more than religiosity alone.

Source. Pew validated voters, 2024. Trump received 81% among White evangelical Protestants, 58% among White nonevangelical Protestants and 55% among Catholics; Harris received 70% among religiously unaffiliated voters (Pew Research Center 2025b).

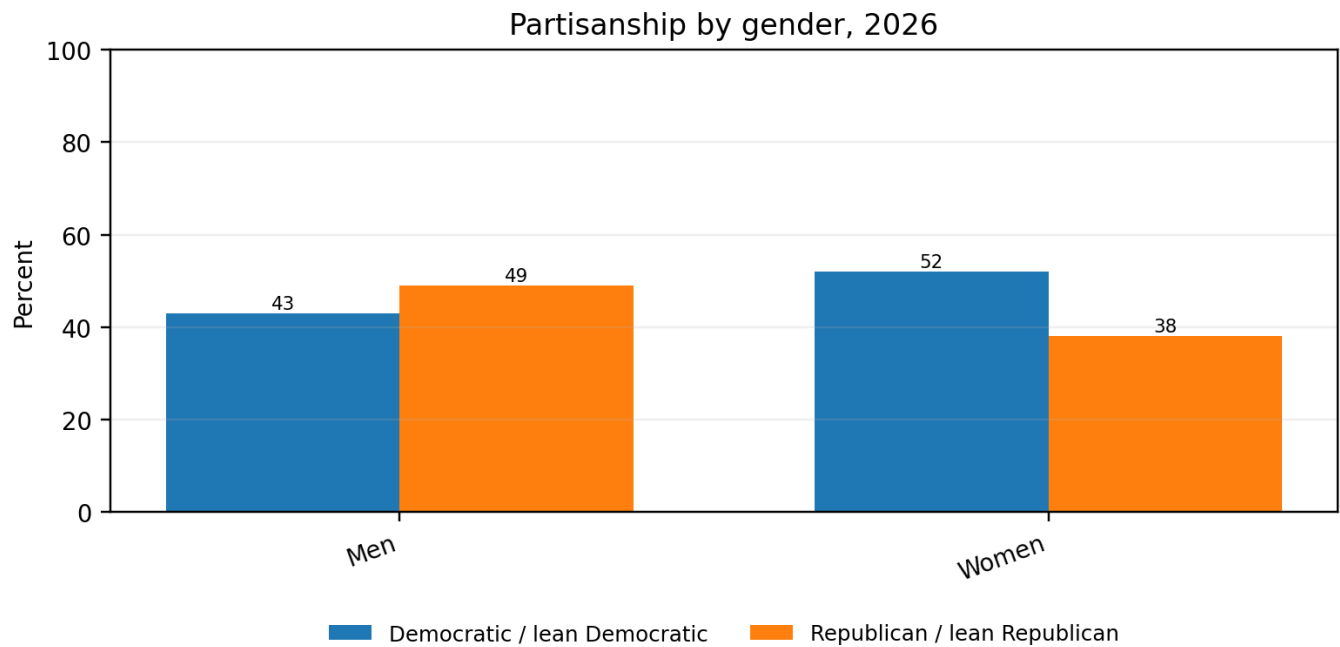


Figure 13. 26 gender gap in party identification.

Source. Pew NPORS 2026: men 49% Republican/43% Democratic; women 38% Republican/52% Democratic. These estimates are party affiliation, not presidential vote (Pew Research Center 2026a).

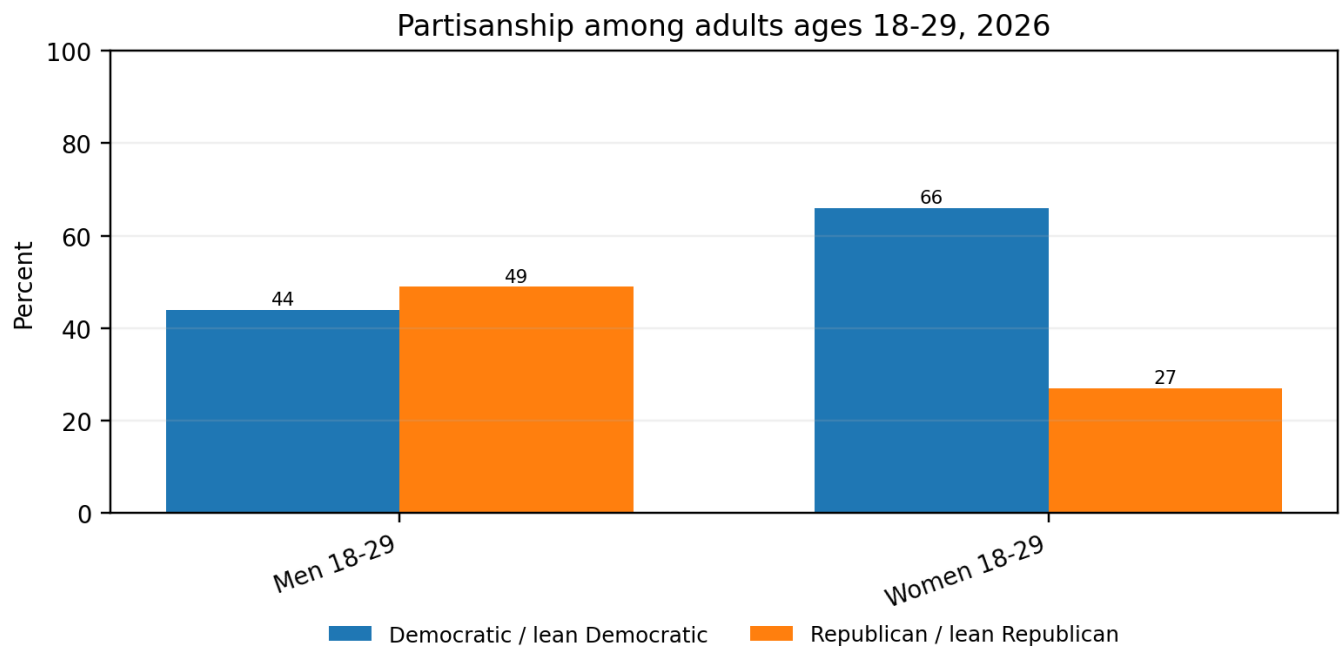


Figure 14. -adult gender divergence, 2026.

Pew cautions that these subgroups have relatively small samples and larger margins of error. MOE/95% CIs are not plotted in this compact figure; see the source and Appendix D. Year-to-year movements should be interpreted cautiously (Pew Research Center 2026a).

Generational politics: Silent Generation, Boomers, Gen X, Millennials and Gen Z

Generational labels are convenient but can obscure age-period-cohort identification. The Silent Generation and older Boomers came of political age in a party system with stronger regional and cross-party ideological overlap. Gen X experienced Reaganism, the end of the Cold War and the rise of cable news. Millennials entered adulthood amid 9/11, the Iraq War, the Great Recession and Obama-era social liberalization. Gen Z entered national politics in an environment of social-media saturation, high housing costs, intense gender politics and a fully nationalized party system.

EMPIRICAL FINDING Pew's 2026 decade-cohort measures show Democratic advantages among adults born in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, but a Republican advantage among those born in the 1960s and 1970s. Cohort estimates do not prove immutable generational identities because parties, issues and turnout change over time (Pew Research Center 2026a).

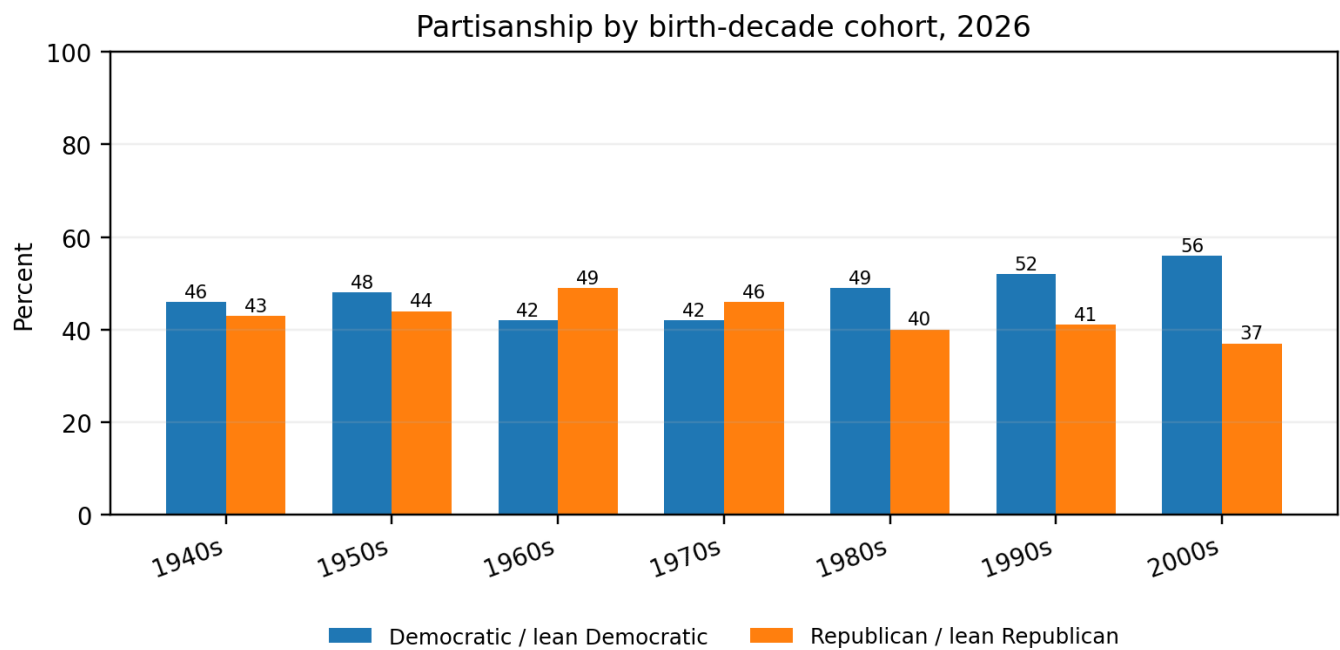


Figure 15. n affiliation by birth-decade cohort, 2026.

Source. Pew NPORS 2026. The chart uses birth-decade cohorts because generational-brand boundaries vary across researchers. The 2000s cohort includes only adults age 18 or older and remains incomplete.

Age effects, cohort effects and period effects

Age effects occur when political attitudes change predictably with life stage. **Cohort effects** arise when formative experiences leave a lasting imprint on a generation. **Period effects** occur when wars, recessions, social movements or political shocks affect all ages simultaneously. Any claim that Gen Z will permanently vote in one direction must distinguish these processes and should be treated as conditional rather than deterministic.

XI. Political Geography and Cultural Worlds

Metropolitan versus nonmetropolitan America

Urban-rural polarization is among the clearest contemporary geographic structures. In validated 2024 voting, Harris carried urban voters 65%-33%, while Trump carried rural voters 69%-29%. Suburbs remained substantially more competitive.

Source: Pew Research Center validated-voter analysis, 2025.

Density itself is partly a proxy for racial diversity, educational composition, occupational structure, religiosity, economic sector, housing and migration. The cleavage is therefore better understood as a combination of metropolitan knowledge/service economies and lower-density economies more embedded in manufacturing, extraction, agriculture and traditional local institutions.

Regional politics

The Northeast and Pacific Coast contain many highly educated metropolitan areas and generally stronger Democratic coalitions. The South remains internally divided between heavily Republican White, evangelical and rural constituencies and strongly Democratic Black electorates and urban centers. The Midwest combines former industrial Democratic traditions with Republican gains among noncollege Whites and persistent Democratic strength in major metros. The Mountain West contains libertarian, Mormon, suburban and high-growth metropolitan combinations that do not reduce to one ideological pattern.

Cultural worldviews

Republican identifiers, on average, display greater attachment to gun ownership, policing, military symbolism, traditional religious institutions, conventional family norms and nationalism. Democratic identifiers, on average, display greater trust in universities, scientists, professional expertise, multicultural norms and environmental institutions. These are statistically supported tendencies, not descriptions of every voter.

For example, Pew's October 2024 survey of 9,593 adults found confidence in scientists at 88% among Democrats and Democratic leaners and 66% among Republicans and Republican leaners. The gap is large, but the Republican figure also demonstrates why the stereotype that Republicans categorically reject science is inaccurate.

Lifestyle politics

Residential preferences, media consumption, vehicle ownership, church attendance, gun ownership, sports, hobbies and consumption patterns can correlate with partisanship. They should not be elevated into causal theories. Lifestyle increasingly signals politics because lifestyle itself is associated with occupation, geography, education, age, religion and social identity.

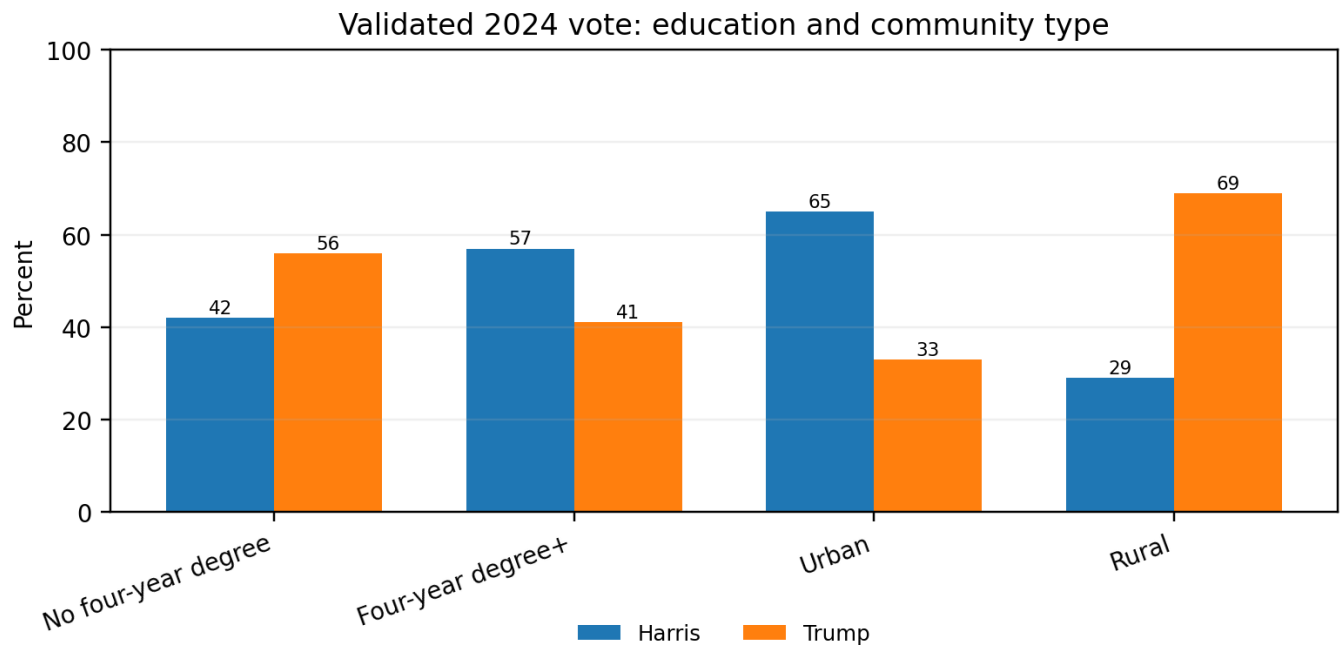


Figure 16. tion and urbanization produced large, independent-looking electoral gaps in 2024.

Source. Pew validated voters: noncollege voters Trump 56%-Harris 42%; college graduates Harris 57%-Trump 41%; urban voters Harris 65%-Trump 33%; rural voters Trump 69%-Harris 29% (Pew Research Center 2025b).

Why place matters beyond demography

Geography is not merely a container for race and education. Local labor markets, housing, commuting, church density, gun culture, agriculture, extraction, manufacturing and exposure to demographic change can generate place-specific political identities. Cramer describes rural consciousness as a framework combining perceptions of distributive unfairness, cultural disrespect and geographic representation; Rodden emphasizes how partisan geography interacts with electoral institutions (Cramer 2016; Rodden 2019).

Suburbs and exurbs

Suburbs are not one constituency. Inner suburbs with high educational attainment and racial diversity have moved differently from lower-density exurbs. Affluent suburbs can contain economically conservative but socially liberal professionals; exurbs often retain stronger Republican alignment around property, schools, guns and cultural traditionalism. The analytically relevant continuum is not simply urban-suburban-rural but density, education, occupational structure and distance from central-city institutions.

XII. Moral and Political Psychology

Moral Foundations Theory

Jonathan Haidt's framework distinguishes care, fairness, loyalty, authority, sanctity and liberty. It is useful because political disagreement can reflect different moral intuitions rather than ignorance or material self-interest alone. Liberal respondents often weight care and fairness relatively heavily, while conservative respondents tend to distribute more moral weight across loyalty, authority and sanctity.

Moral Foundations Theory nevertheless faces disputes over factor structure, measurement, cultural generalizability and whether the foundations partly reproduce preexisting ideology. It is most useful as a micro-level framework, not a substitute for American political development, institutions or political economy.

Political psychology

Research associates political conservatism, on average, with lower openness and somewhat higher conscientiousness; other literatures examine threat perception, authoritarianism, social-dominance orientation, disgust sensitivity, need for order and tolerance for ambiguity. Effect sizes are generally modest and context dependent. Psychological variables cannot explain the historical timing of party realignment by themselves.

Avoiding psychological reductionism

Even when group averages differ, distributions overlap heavily. The existence of correlations does not justify inferring an individual's personality, intelligence, authoritarianism or moral capacity from party identity. Political psychology contributes mechanisms; it does not replace history, class, institutions or strategic elite behavior.

Authoritarianism

Authoritarianism research generally measures preferences for social conformity, order and punitive responses to norm violation rather than support for dictatorship per se. Right-wing authoritarianism has a long empirical literature, but newer work also develops measures of left-wing authoritarian attitudes. The existence of psychological correlates should not be used to classify every partisan or to replace institutional and historical explanations (Altemeyer 1996; Costello et al. 2022).

Social dominance orientation

Social dominance orientation measures preference for group-based hierarchy. It is associated with several conservative and racial attitudes, but its political effects depend on which groups and hierarchies are salient. It should be distinguished from economic self-interest and from generic authoritarianism (Pratto et al. 1994; Sidanius and Pratto 1999).

Threat perception, disgust and need for order

Studies associate some conservative attitudes with threat sensitivity, need for closure, conscientiousness and disgust sensitivity. Meta-analytic evidence generally finds modest average relationships rather than deterministic psychological types. Replication and measurement disputes are especially important in claims linking pathogen disgust to political ideology (Jost et al. 2003; Sibley, Osborne and Duckitt 2012).

Openness, conscientiousness and ambiguity tolerance

Openness to experience is the personality dimension most consistently associated with social liberalism; conscientiousness shows a weaker positive association with conservatism. These effects are probabilistic and

context-sensitive. Political institutions and elite cues can activate or suppress the expression of psychological predispositions (Gerber et al. 2010; Bakker 2017).

Moral Foundations Theory - contribution and criticism

Haidt and collaborators argue that liberals emphasize care and fairness more heavily while conservatives distribute moral concern across care, fairness, loyalty, authority and sanctity. The framework helps explain why citizens can interpret the same controversy through different moral vocabularies. Critics question factor structure, construct validity, cultural generalizability and whether the measures partly redescribe ideology rather than explain it. Revised scales improve measurement but do not eliminate these debates (Graham, Haidt and Nosek 2009; Haidt 2012; Curry, Mullins and Whitehouse 2019; Atari et al. 2023).

Analytical rule: political psychology is most useful as a micro-level mechanism nested inside social identities and institutions. It is least useful when used as a total explanation for why historical coalitions realigned.

Table 8

Effect-size and replication audit

Political-psychology findings are best read as probabilistic associations with overlapping group distributions. The table reports selected meta-analytic estimates to calibrate magnitude and replication.

Study / design	N / scope	Selected results	Interpretive limit
Sibley, Osborne & Duckitt (2012)	73 studies; N=71,895	Openness vs. conservatism $r=-.18$; conscientiousness $r=.10$.	Weak average associations; openness effect varies with systemic threat and context.
Jost et al. (2003)	88 samples; 12 countries; N=22,818	Dogmatism / ambiguity intolerance $r=.34$; need for order/closure $r=.26$; threat/loss $r=.18$.	Older heterogeneous measures and designs; associations do not license individual diagnosis.
Frimer (2020)	Meta-analysis across replications/extensions; N=303,680	Moral-language effects were small: authority $r=.05$; purity $r=.14$; harm $r=.00$; fairness $r=-.03$.	Replication success about 30%; original text-analysis effects were much larger than later estimates.

Reading rule. Effect sizes vary with constructs, instruments, countries and historical conditions. Sibley et al. (2012) explicitly show contextual moderation. Jost et al. (2003) synthesize an older literature with broader constructs. Frimer (2020) illustrates why replication and measurement design matter for moral-foundations claims. These literatures contribute mechanisms; they do not rank citizens or substitute for institutional and historical explanation.

XIII. Policy Matrix

Table 9

Policy area	Democratic coalition tendency	Republican coalition tendency	Important complication
Tax	More progressive	Lower rates	Populist Republicanism complicates older business orthodoxy.
Minimum wage	Increase	More cautious or opposed federally	State variation is substantial.
Labor	Collective bargaining support	Right-to-work and management flexibility	Working-class GOP voters complicate the institutional alignment.
Industrial policy	Subsidies and investment	Increasingly accepts strategic policy	Partial convergence in mechanism.
Trade	Managed and strategic	Tariff-oriented under Trump	Major reversal of the 1990s stereotype.
Antitrust	Progressive revival	Populist anti-Big-Tech faction	Targets and justifications differ.
Social Security	Protect / expansion faction	Broadly protect benefits rhetorically	Mass opinion constrains retrenchment.
Medicare	Protect / expansion factions	Protect with reform and fiscal tensions	Seniors are central to both coalitions.
Medicaid	Expand / protect	Greater retrenchment and work requirements	Large state variation.
SNAP	Broader support	Tighter eligibility and work conditions	Program opinion can differ from abstract welfare attitudes.
ACA	Preserve / expand	Historically repeal/replace; reform orientation now more varied	Full repeal is less central than in the 2010s.
Drug prices	Greater federal negotiation	Mixed, with populist overlap	Potential cross-party policy space.
Public schools	Institution-centered	Greater parental choice	Charter-school politics crosses lines.
Vouchers	More skeptical	More supportive	State-level politics is decisive.
Student debt	More relief	Less federal forgiveness	Class tensions exist within the Democratic coalition.
Police	Reform + funding factions	Stronger order emphasis	Democratic urban officials vary substantially.
Sentencing	Reform wing	Order orientation + reform factions	Bipartisan reforms have occurred.
Guns	Regulation	Gun-rights protection	Some voter-level overlap exists on background checks.
Immigration	Legalization + enforcement	Restriction/deportation + selective legal immigration	High-skilled immigration can attract cross-party support.
Climate	Strong mitigation	Lower regulatory emphasis	Republican nuclear and innovation factions complicate.
Fossil fuels	Transition	Expansion	Democratic energy-producing states differ.
Nuclear power	Growing support	Generally supportive	Increasing convergence.
AI	Regulation/safety + industrial strategy	Innovation/competition + anti-censorship	Positions remain fluid.
Big Tech	Privacy, antitrust and content-safety factions	Anti-censorship and antitrust factions	Both coalitions distrust technology power for different reasons.

Immigration as a case of polarization plus consensus

Survey evidence around the 2024 election showed sharp partisan differences on mass deportation while also finding large majorities in both coalitions supporting stronger border security and more high-skilled legal immigration. The analytically appropriate framework is therefore different preferred balances of enforcement, admission and incorporation - not borders versus no borders.

Elite, platform and mass differences

Every major policy area should be read at several levels: official platforms, congressional voting, presidential action, administrative implementation, activist agendas and ordinary voter opinion. These layers sometimes converge and sometimes diverge. A platform can state an ideological goal that governing coalitions dilute; activists can prioritize issues that typical identifiers rank low; voters can support a program while rejecting the abstract ideological label attached to it.

Table 10

Six-layer policy validation framework

For each major policy domain, the table below separates official platforms, presidential governing behavior, congressional behavior, organized policy networks, mass opinion and internal factions. This guards against treating one level as the party as a whole.

Evidence audit: row-level documentary and mass evidence is crosswalked in Appendix F (pp. 80-81) and Appendix D (p. 77); platform, governing and mass-opinion evidence are not treated as interchangeable.

Table 10 (continued)

Policy domain	Official platform / leadership	Presidential governing behavior	Congressional behavior	Activists / interest groups	Ordinary partisan public	Internal exceptions
Taxation	Democrats favor greater progressivity; Republicans lower rates and extensions of 2017-era cuts.	Biden pursued corporate/high-income increases; Trump-era 2025 law extended/modified major tax provisions.	Roll calls highly polarized.	Labor/progressive groups favor progressivity; business groups favor lower capital/business taxes.	Mass opinion is less doctrinal; many voters favor taxing high incomes while also preferring lower personal taxes.	Pro-business Democrats; populist Republicans skeptical of some corporations.
Social Security / Medicare	Both leaderships generally promise protection.	Recent administrations have largely avoided direct benefit cuts.	Reform proposals divide within as well as between parties.	AARP/senior organizations constrain retrenchment.	Large majorities in both camps oppose benefit reductions.	Fiscal conservatives favor long-run restructuring; progressive Democrats favor expansion.
Medicaid / SNAP	Democrats emphasize protection/expansion; Republicans tighter eligibility/work rules.	P.L.119-21 materially changed Medicaid and SNAP rules.	Strong party-line differences in 2025 reconciliation.	Health providers/anti-poverty groups versus fiscal-conservative networks.	Program-specific opinion varies by framing and beneficiary group.	Lower-income Republicans often more supportive of government health responsibility than higher-income Republicans.
Healthcare	Democrats defend/expand ACA; Republicans prefer market-oriented reform and state flexibility.	Obama/Biden strengthened ACA; Republican administrations sought regulatory and statutory retrenchment.	ACA repeal/expansion votes strongly polarized.	Insurers, hospitals, pharma and ideological groups have cross-cutting interests.	Democrats far more likely to see federal responsibility for coverage.	Single-payer remains a Democratic factional rather than universal party position.
Labor	Democrats pro-union; Republicans favor right-to-work/management flexibility.	Democratic NLRB appointments and executive policy are more labor-friendly.	PRO Act and right-to-work disputes show sharp division.	Unions strongly Democratic institutionally; business associations more Republican.	Union members are more Democratic than nonmembers but not uniformly so.	Working-class Republicans; pro-business Democrats.
Trade / tariffs	Democrats favor strategic managed trade; contemporary GOP explicitly embraces tariffs and reciprocity.	Biden retained important China tariffs and industrial controls; Trump expanded broad/sectoral tariffs.	Congress often delegates substantial trade authority to the executive.	Exporters/importers, unions and manufacturers split by sector.	Opinion depends strongly on China, jobs and price framing.	Free-trade Republicans; protectionist Democrats in labor/manufacturing regions.
Immigration	Democrats combine legal pathways with enforcement; Republicans prioritize restriction and deportation.	Administrative rules produce large swings across presidencies.	Comprehensive legislation repeatedly stalls.	Immigrant-rights, business and enforcement groups exert competing pressure.	Strong gap on mass deportations but large overlap on border security/high-skilled immigration.	Business Republicans support legal labor flows; border-state Democrats often favor stronger enforcement.
Education	Democrats public-school/union-centered; Republicans choice/parental-rights centered.	Education Department civil-rights and rulemaking priorities shift sharply.	Federal education law is less party-differentiated than cultural oversight politics.	Teachers unions vs school-choice networks.	Parents frequently hold mixed views: public-school support plus curriculum/choice concerns.	Charter-school Democrats; rural Republicans dependent on public schools.
Crime / policing	Democratic leadership balances reform and public safety; Republicans emphasize order and enforcement.	Federal grants and DOJ priorities shift with administrations.	Some bipartisan reform exists, but bail/prosecution disputes are polarized.	Police unions, reform groups, prosecutors and victims groups differ.	Mass opinion is more punitive during crime spikes and more reform-oriented on specific practices.	Moderate Democratic mayors/prosecutors; libertarian Republican reformers.
Guns	Democrats support stronger regulation; Republicans prioritize Second Amendment rights.	Executive rulemaking and enforcement differ.	Background checks and assault-weapon legislation divide parties; some red-flag policy is bipartisan at state level.	NRA/gun-rights networks vs gun-control groups.	Some regulation, especially background checks, receives cross-party support while ownership/carry issues are more polarized.	Rural Democrats; suburban gun-regulation Republicans.
Climate / energy	Democrats climate mitigation and clean-energy investment; Republicans energy abundance/fossil production.	Biden IRA/agency rules vs Trump rollback and energy-expansion policies.	Tax-credit and regulatory roll calls highly polarized.	Environmental groups vs fossil-energy networks; utilities and nuclear interests cross-cut.	Nuclear power and innovation create partial convergence.	Energy-state Democrats; conservation-oriented Republicans.
Technology / AI	Democratic networks place more weight on safety, rights and regulation; Republican leadership emphasizes innovation, infrastructure and anti-censorship.	Biden EO 14110 versus Trump EO 14179 and 2025 AI Action Plan mark a clear regulatory shift.	AI is fluid and not yet fully sorted legislatively.	Big Tech, startups, labor, civil-liberties and national-security groups have conflicting interests.	Public concern about jobs/privacy crosses parties.	National-security hawks and antitrust populists exist in both parties.

POINT-OF-USE EVIDENCE KEY. Platform claims: 2024 national party platforms. Governing claims: enacted statutes, executive orders, agency implementation and congressional roll calls. Mass claims: representative surveys from Pew, ANES and CES. Interest-group claims: organizational records and campaign-finance/lobbying data. Question populations differ across sources; Appendix B/D/F documents denominators and cautions.

Government scope: symbolic polarization and programmatic overlap

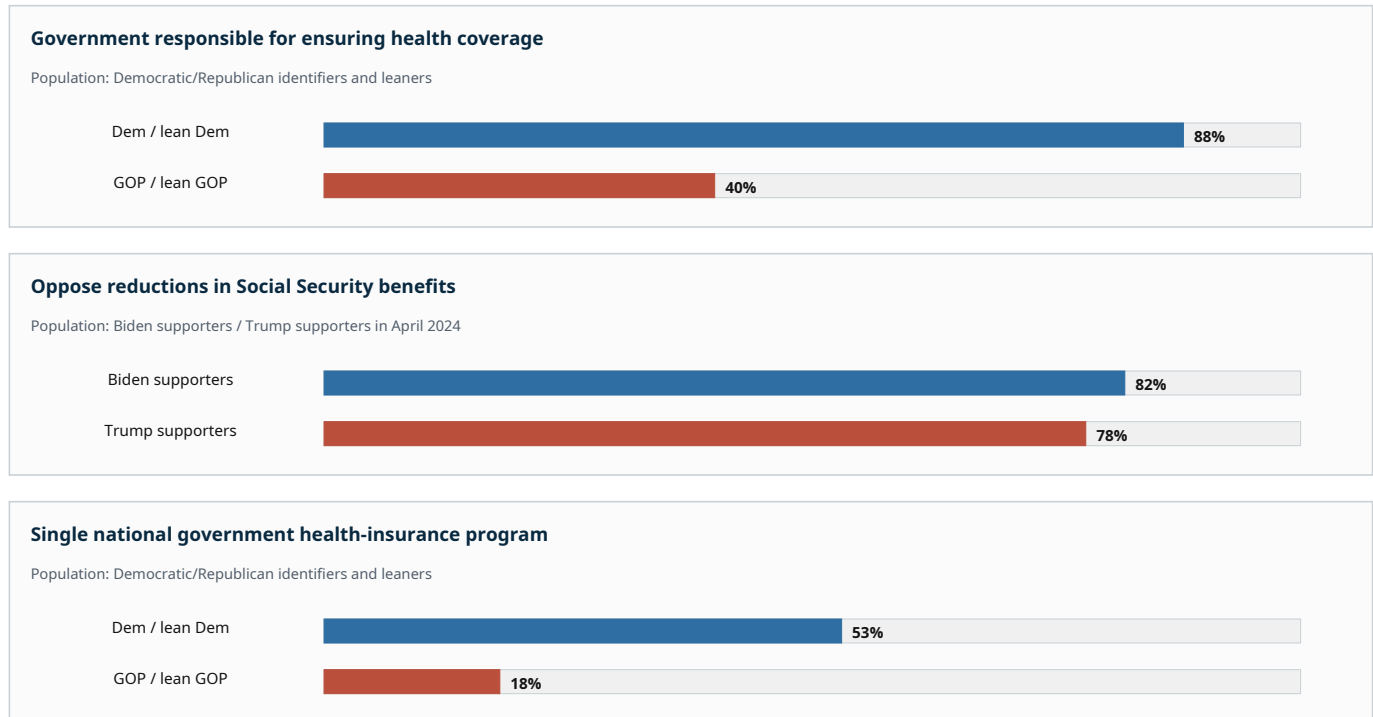


Figure 17. Three related but non-identical survey measures; panels are separated because the denominators differ.

Source and comparability. Pew American Trends Panel, Apr. 8-14, 2024, N=8,709 adults (7,166 registered voters where applicable). Health-coverage responsibility and single-government-insurance figures use party identifiers/leaners; the Social Security item uses presidential-candidate supporters. Point estimates shown; margins of error are not plotted. Do not compare the three panels as identical constructs.

Immigration: conflict and common ground

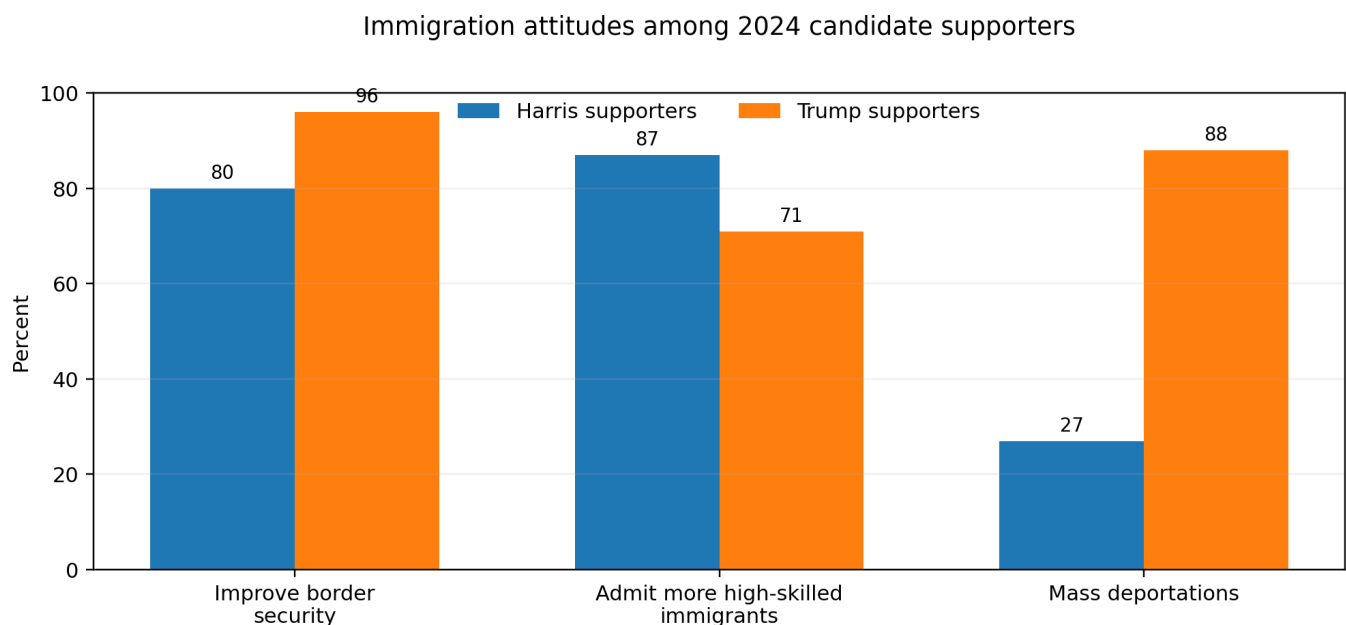


Figure 18. ration opinion contains both intense disagreement and substantial overlap.

Source. Pew Research Center survey, Aug. 5-11, 2024, registered voters/supporters. Improving border security: Trump supporters 96%, Harris supporters 80%; admitting more high-skilled immigrants: 71% and 87%; mass deportations: 88% and 27% (Pew Research Center 2024f).

Longitudinal cleavage supplement: snapshots in context

These compact endpoints place several 2024-26 snapshots in longer context. Measures are not merged when populations or question wording differ.

Geography: rural party ID 2008 approximately even 2023 GOP 60% / Dem 35% Pew registered voters; long-run shift, not one-election vote.	Religion: Democratic coalition composition 2008 Christian 74% 2023 Christian 54% Religiously unaffiliated were 38% of the 2023 Democratic coalition.
Gender: current directional gap 2023 voters Women: D51/R44; Men: R52/D46 2026 adults Women: D52/R38; Men: R49/D43 Different populations/methods; directional consistency is descriptive, not a seamless series.	Institutional trust: scientists Apr. 2020 All adults 87%; GOP 85% Oct. 2024 All adults 77%; GOP 66% Democratic/lean-Dem confidence was 88% in 2024; confidence is not policy agreement.

Named-generation reference table

Silent Generation	1928-1945
Baby Boomers	1946-1964
Generation X	1965-1980
Millennials	1981-1996
Generation Z	1997-2012*

* Pew used 1997-2012 only as an analytical span in some earlier reports; it explicitly stated that no official chronological endpoint had been set for Gen Z. This monograph therefore uses birth-decade cohorts for its main empirical chart. See Pew Research Center (2018, 2019).

XIV. Constitution, Law and Competing Rights

Constitutional philosophy

The contemporary Republican legal movement is more strongly associated with originalism, textualism, judicial skepticism toward administrative discretion, stronger Second Amendment doctrine and narrower substantive-due-process methodology. Democratic-aligned legal thought contains living-constitutional approaches, broader substantive-rights traditions, equality-oriented arguments and greater acceptance of regulatory government. Neither camp is doctrinally uniform; textualism, for example, now influences jurists across ideological lines.

The judiciary as an institutional battleground

Judicial nominations became central because courts adjudicate disputes that ordinary politics has not resolved. Recent decisions concerning abortion, firearms, affirmative action and administrative law show how constitutional doctrine reallocates authority among legislatures, executives, agencies, courts, states and individuals.

Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization removed the federal constitutional abortion-right framework associated with *Roe*, returning extensive regulatory authority to elected governments. *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen* strengthened Second Amendment protection for public firearm carrying. *Students for Fair Admissions* sharply restricted race-conscious admissions. *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo* overruled Chevron deference and enlarged the judiciary's role in independently determining statutory meaning.

Rights as priority conflicts

Rights collision	Democratic tendency	Republican tendency
Religion vs. nondiscrimination	Nondiscrimination receives greater weight	Religious exemption receives greater weight
Guns vs. public safety	Regulatory authority receives greater weight	Individual gun right receives greater weight
Abortion	Bodily and reproductive autonomy	Fetal protection and state authority
Speech vs. platform governance	Greater willingness to regulate some harmful or platform-mediated content	Stronger anti-censorship emphasis
Voting access vs. administrative security	Access emphasis	Procedural-control and integrity emphasis
Equality vs. race neutrality	Greater support for corrective remedies	Greater support for individual/colorblind neutrality
Property vs. environmental regulation	Greater regulatory latitude	Stronger property-right presumption

American partisan rights conflict is often a problem of **which right receives priority when rights collide**, not which coalition believes in rights at all.

Administrative governance

One of the deepest institutional differences concerns professional administration. Democratic politics generally places greater confidence in agencies, scientific expertise, regulators and administrative implementation. Republican politics has developed stronger suspicion toward bureaucratic autonomy. Populist conservatism creates a paradox: it can oppose an autonomous administrative state while favoring stronger presidential control over that same state. The institutional conflict can therefore be bureaucratic autonomy versus political-executive control rather than power versus no power.

Election administration and institutional reform

Democratic institutional reform agendas more often emphasize voting access, restrictions on partisan gerrymandering, campaign-finance regulation, possible filibuster reform, some forms of Supreme Court reform and D.C. statehood. Republican agendas more often emphasize voter identification, state legislative authority, restrictions or safeguards around mail voting, resistance to court expansion and preservation of existing federal arrangements. The deeper dispute concerns whether the principal democratic risk is exclusion and minority-rule institutions or procedural vulnerability and excessive centralization.

Originalism, textualism and living constitutionalism

Originalism asks judges to interpret constitutional meaning through the text's original public meaning or closely related historical understandings. Textualism applies a text-centered methodology primarily to statutes and is not identical to originalism. Living-constitution approaches place greater weight on doctrinal development, precedent and evolving applications of broad constitutional principles. Modern legal practice is more heterogeneous than party rhetoric: liberal judges use textual arguments, and conservative judges disagree over originalism's implications (Whittington 1999; Balkin 2011; Scalia and Garner 2012).

Four decisions that changed the institutional balance

Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization (2022) overruled *Roe* and *Casey* and returned abortion regulation largely to elected governments. *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen* (2022) strengthened a history-and-tradition approach to Second Amendment review. *Students for Fair Admissions* (2023) sharply constrained race-conscious university admissions. *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo* (2024) overruled Chevron deference, shifting interpretive authority from agencies toward courts. Together these decisions show why party conflict over rights is also conflict over which institution decides (U.S. Supreme Court 2022a, 2022b, 2023, 2024).

Table 11

Rights-priority matrix

Rights collision	Democratic tendency	Republican tendency	Core legal question
Religious exercise vs nondiscrimination	Greater weight to equal-access rules	Greater weight to exemptions and associational autonomy	When does neutral regulation substantially burden religious exercise?
Gun ownership vs public safety	Greater regulatory authority	Stronger individual right and history/tradition test	Which regulations fit the Second Amendment's historical scope?
Reproductive autonomy vs fetal protection	Broader autonomy/privacy claims	Broader state regulatory authority / fetal-life claims	What rights are constitutionally protected and at what level of government?
Race-conscious remedies vs equal treatment	Greater acceptance of remedial attention to group inequality	Colorblind individual-right interpretation	When does remedying inequality become unconstitutional classification?
Speech vs platform/institutional governance	More willingness to regulate some harmful or institutional contexts	Stronger anti-censorship emphasis	State action, private-platform rights and compelled speech.

XV. Family, Immigration, Crime and Cultural Authority

Family and cultural reproduction

Many high-intensity partisan conflicts concern institutions that transmit norms between generations: schools, universities, churches, families, entertainment and social media. Disputes over curricula, gender identity and parental rights become salient because they ask who legitimately possesses authority to reproduce social norms - parents, professional educators, religious communities, scientific institutions, the state or autonomous individuals.

Immigration

Immigration simultaneously implicates labor markets, sovereignty, national identity, humanitarian responsibility, ethnicity, demographic change and administrative capacity. Republican politics currently places greater weight on border enforcement, deportation and sovereignty. Democratic politics places greater weight on legalization pathways, DACA, humanitarian protections and incorporation of settled immigrants while still supporting substantial enforcement.

The conflict is best conceptualized as competing combinations of **enforcement + admission + incorporation**. Neither coalition is accurately summarized as no borders or no immigration.

Crime and order

Democratic coalitions contain both criminal-justice reform constituencies and urban officials accountable for public safety. Republican coalitions generally emphasize policing, prosecution, punishment and deterrence more strongly. The deeper cleavage concerns the relative causal weight assigned to social conditions, institutional misconduct and rehabilitation versus individual culpability, deterrence and order. Bipartisan reform episodes demonstrate that these tendencies are not absolute.

Education as authority conflict

Educational politics has become a conflict over both resource allocation and cultural authority. Democratic coalitions generally support public-school institutions, teachers unions, educational professionals and a national civil-rights role. Republican coalitions increasingly favor school choice, vouchers, parental rights, curriculum restrictions and skepticism toward universities. Education is unusually consequential because it simultaneously produces credentials, cultural values, political socialization and elite recruitment.

Gun politics

Democratic coalitions prioritize background checks, restrictions on some weapons and public-safety regulation more strongly. Republican coalitions place greater weight on Second Amendment rights, self-defense, concealed carry and skepticism toward registration or broad restrictions. Gun politics is not only a policy disagreement; it is embedded in regional culture, rural identity, conceptions of state power and differing understandings of personal security.

Family policy beyond symbolism

Family politics includes not only abortion and sexuality but tax credits, paid leave, childcare, marriage penalties, fertility, school schedules and housing. Democratic family policy more often socializes part of the cost of caregiving through public subsidy. Republican family policy more often emphasizes tax relief, parental authority, marriage and family autonomy, though national-conservative proposals increasingly support direct family benefits. This is another area where the old big/small-government binary obscures the real dispute.

LGBT politics: issues at different stages of sorting

Same-sex marriage has moved toward broad social acceptance and therefore produces less partisan separation than a decade ago. Transgender policy remains more unsettled and is divided across school policy, sports, identity documentation, nondiscrimination rules, medical treatment and parental authority. Elite/activist positions often run ahead of ordinary partisan publics in both directions, making question wording particularly important.

Crime: causal theories of disorder

Democratic reform arguments more often emphasize institutional misconduct, unequal enforcement, social conditions and rehabilitation; Republican arguments more often emphasize deterrence, incapacitation, individual culpability and visible order. Yet actual urban Democratic governance frequently combines reform with police funding, and Republican coalitions contain libertarian criminal-justice reformers. The difference is therefore one of weighting and coalition emphasis rather than categorical opposition to safety or reform.

XVI. Media, Information and Polarization

Partisan media systems

Fox News should not simply be called "Republican media," just as *The New York Times* should not simply be called "Democratic media." The analytically correct questions concern audience composition, trust, agenda setting, framing and elite influence.

Pew's 2025 media survey found Republican news consumption much more concentrated around Fox than Democratic news consumption around any single outlet. Democratic audiences were more dispersed among CNN, broadcast networks, MSNBC, NPR, AP, PBS and major newspapers. Meaningful crossover nevertheless remained.

Pew Research Center, The Political Gap in Americans' News Sources, 2025.

Information ecosystems, not sealed echo chambers

The two coalitions inhabit increasingly different information environments, but they are not airtight. Audience overlap, weak partisanship and multi-platform use prevent the existence of perfectly sealed partisan worlds. The most important asymmetry is the greater concentration of Republican news use around a smaller number of explicitly counter-establishment institutions, while Democratic news use is distributed across a larger set of legacy and public-service organizations.

Social media and causation

The proposition that social media created American polarization is stronger than current evidence permits. A large 2020 Facebook experiment involving more than 23,000 participants substantially reduced exposure to politically like-minded sources but found no measurable change across preregistered measures of affective polarization, ideological extremity or false beliefs. Social media structures exposure and can amplify communication, but polarization has deeper institutional, geographic, partisan and social roots.

Nyhan et al., "Like-minded sources on Facebook are prevalent but not polarizing," Nature 620, 2023.

Forms of polarization

Form	Meaning
Elite ideological polarization	Party officeholders and policy agendas become more ideologically separated.
Mass ideological sorting	Voters increasingly select the party that corresponds to their broader ideological identities.
Affective polarization	Partisans increasingly dislike and distrust the opposing camp.
Geographic polarization	Political environments diverge across urban, suburban, exurban and rural areas.
Educational polarization	College attainment becomes a major marker of party alignment.
Religious polarization	Religious traditions and secularization become more aligned with party identity.
Racial polarization	Racial groups retain distinct partisan distributions even as some gaps loosen.
Institutional polarization	Trust in universities, media, agencies and professional expertise becomes increasingly partisan.

Why polarization happened

1. **Racial realignment** reorganized party coalitions.
2. **Religious mobilization** linked abortion, sexuality and public religion more strongly to party identity.
3. **Ideological sorting** reduced the number of conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans.
4. **Nationalization** weakened local party variation.
5. **Geographic sorting** made metropolitan and rural environments more distinct.

6. **Educational sorting** strengthened the professional/noncollege divide.
7. **Media differentiation** reinforced divergent agendas and institutional trust.
8. **Negative partisanship** made opposition to the other coalition an increasingly important motive.

This is a feedback system rather than a one-directional chain. Social media arrived too late to explain polarization that began decades earlier; primary elections matter under some conditions but cannot explain the whole trajectory; and economic transformation matters without mapping mechanically onto voting.

Negative partisanship

Affective-polarization scholarship suggests that party identity increasingly operates as a social identity extending beyond policy preferences. Traditional competition asks: *Which party's program do I prefer?* Negative partisanship increasingly asks: *Which opposing coalition must be prevented from obtaining power?* The second question raises emotional intensity and the political cost of compromise.

Misperceptions

Americans frequently overestimate the ideological and demographic extremity of the opposing party. Ahler and Sood find that citizens substantially overestimate stereotypical groups inside the other coalition and that correcting those beliefs can reduce perceived social distance. Real sorting is therefore distinct from perceived total separation.

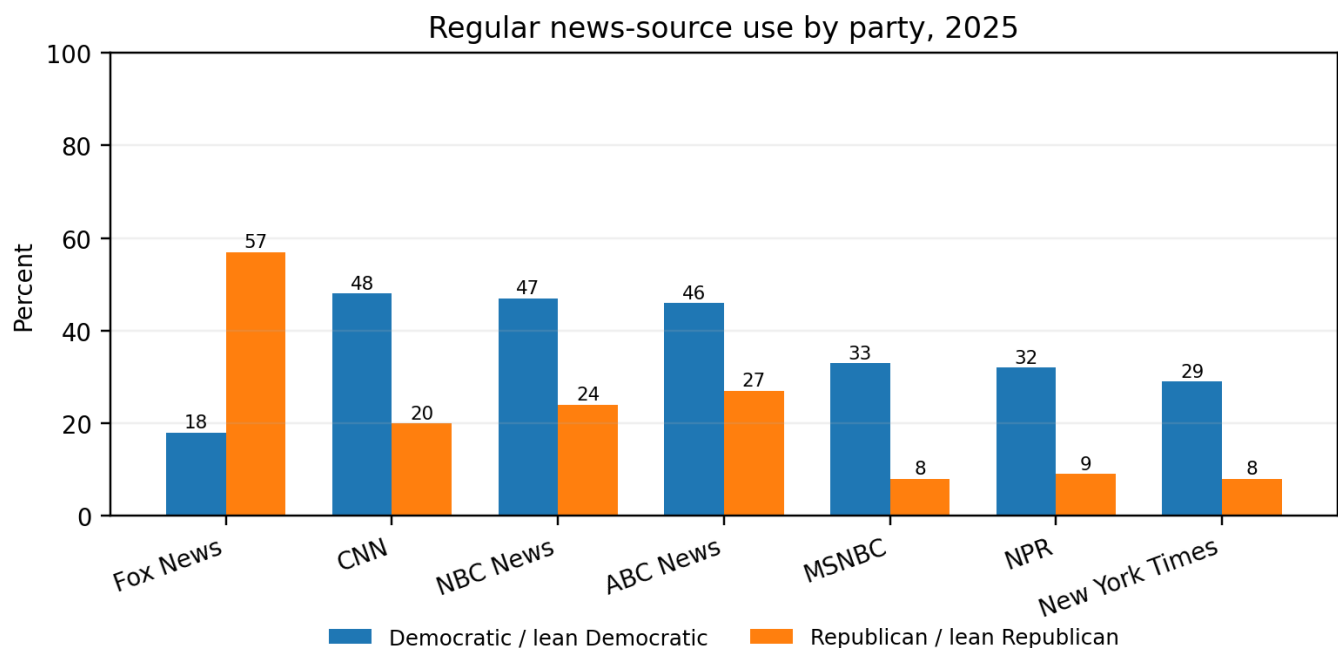


Figure 19. source use is politically differentiated, but overlap remains.

Source. Pew ATP, Mar. 10-16, 2025, N=9,482 U.S. adults. Republicans regularly using Fox: 57%; Democrats: 18%. Democrats regularly using CNN 48%, NBC 47%, ABC 46%, MSNBC 33%, NPR 32%, New York Times 29%. Republican use of CNN was 20%, NBC 24%, ABC 27%; the study measured 30 sources and explicitly did not classify outlet content ideologically (Pew Research Center 2025c).

Outlet-by-outlet analytical profiles

Outlet / medium	Audience structure	Political role	Analytical caution
Fox News	Largest single regular news source among Republicans in Pew's 2025 study.	Agenda setting, elite signaling, conservative coalition coordination.	Audience contains Democrats/moderates; Fox is not identical to the Republican Party.
MSNBC	Disproportionately Democratic audience.	Liberal commentary and interpretation, activist/elite feedback.	Democratic voters use many other sources; not a centralized party organ.

Table 12

Outlet / medium	Audience structure	Political role	Analytical caution
CNN	Heavily used by Democrats but meaningful Republican crossover.	National agenda and breaking-news framing.	Audience composition does not establish the ideological content of every program.
New York Times / Washington Post	Professional, highly educated, predominantly Democratic-leaning audiences.	Elite agenda setting, policy framing, investigative reporting.	Editorial pages and newsrooms are analytically distinct; readership is not party membership.
Wall Street Journal	More politically mixed audience than many major outlets.	Business-policy agenda, conservative editorial tradition alongside a broad news operation.	Editorial-page ideology should not be generalized to every news product.
Talk radio	Historically strong conservative audience.	Movement coordination and issue amplification since the late 20th century.	Fragmented local and national formats.
Podcasts	Highly fragmented; some large shows attract younger male audiences.	Long-form elite bypass, personality-centered politics.	No single partisan orientation; distribution is platform-driven.
Substack	Writer-centered, ideologically heterogeneous.	Disintermediation of traditional editorial institutions.	Subscription audiences can be niche and self-selecting.
YouTube	Mass platform with political subcultures across ideologies.	Video persuasion, commentary and influencer politics.	Algorithmic exposure varies; platform-level claims require careful causal evidence.
X	Elite-journalist-politician network plus mass users.	Rapid agenda formation and conflict amplification.	Highly unrepresentative of the total electorate.
TikTok	Younger audience and creator-centered news exposure.	Short-form issue framing and political identity formation.	Fast-changing platform demographics; causal claims about persuasion remain difficult.

Algorithms, selective exposure and causal evidence

EMPIRICAL FINDING A large 2020 Facebook experiment involving more than 23,000 participants substantially reduced exposure to like-minded sources but found no measurable change in preregistered measures of affective polarization or ideological extremity. The finding does not show that social media is politically irrelevant; it shows that one exposure mechanism cannot be assumed to be the master cause of polarization (Nyhan et al. 2023).

XVII. Party Factions and Sources of Power

Table 13

Democratic factions

Faction	Characteristic emphasis
Progressive left	Inequality, labor, climate and institutional reform.
Social-democratic / democratic-socialist wing	Universal social programs and stronger labor power.
Mainstream liberals	Civil rights + welfare-state capitalism + institutional internationalism.
Establishment / institutional Democrats	Incremental governance and coalition management.
Centrists	Electoral pragmatism, fiscal moderation and mixed cultural positioning.
Pro-business Democrats	Market-friendly, often technology- or finance-connected.
Culturally moderate Democrats	Especially relevant in working-class and geographically dispersed constituencies.
Multiracial working-class Democrats	Economically interventionist but sometimes culturally more moderate.

Pew's 2026 typology reinforces this heterogeneity. Its "Order and Opportunity Left," for example, is racially diverse, comparatively religious and economically pressured - a profile that does not resemble a stereotype of secular professional-class progressivism.

Republican factions

Faction	Characteristic emphasis
MAGA populists	Trump-centered populist nationalism and anti-establishment politics.
National conservatives	State capacity used for national cohesion, family and strategic economic objectives.
Religious conservatives	Family, abortion and religious freedom.
Reagan conservatives	Tax reduction, markets, deregulation and alliances.
Libertarians	Markets + personal liberty + limited state.
Business conservatives	Tax and regulatory priorities.
Foreign-policy hawks	Military primacy and alliance deterrence.
Restraint conservatives	Reduced commitments abroad.
America First constituencies	Sovereignty, tariffs, border control and transactional foreign policy.

Pew's "Pragmatic and Polite Right" provides an important corrective to the assumption that every Republican voter is a MAGA ideological maximalist. The group is economically conservative but comparatively moderate on race and diversity and more willing than harder-right groups to view inequality as a problem.

Where party power resides

American parties are not best understood as European-style hierarchical membership organizations. Power is distributed among voters, activists, elected officials, donors, PACs, unions, corporations, advocacy groups, think tanks, media networks and formal party committees. The policy-demanders framework captures a central reality: the party is a coalition/network surrounding a ballot label.

Party networks as bargaining systems

Factions are not merely ideological labels. They possess different resources: activists supply volunteer labor; donors supply money; interest groups provide policy expertise and endorsements; media figures supply attention; elected officials supply institutional authority; think tanks supply policy blueprints. Power therefore varies by issue and institutional setting. A faction can dominate presidential nominations while remaining weak

in congressional committees, or dominate policy expertise while lacking mass enthusiasm (Bawn et al. 2012; Cohen et al. 2008).

Democratic factional tensions

- **Professional-class liberalism vs multiracial working-class politics:** cultural and institutional priorities do not always align with noncollege voter preferences.
- **Progressivism vs centrism:** disagreement over redistribution, policing, immigration framing and institutional reform.
- **Labor developmentalism vs climate/consumer priorities:** trade, permitting and energy infrastructure can divide constituencies.
- **Internationalism vs restraint:** military assistance and Middle East policy can create sharp activist-elite disagreement.

Republican factional tensions

- **Market liberalism vs economic nationalism:** tariffs, antitrust and industrial policy.
- **Libertarianism vs cultural-state activism:** limited government versus regulation of schools, platforms and reproductive policy.
- **Reagan internationalism vs America First:** alliances, Ukraine and intervention.
- **Business conservatism vs anti-corporate populism:** Big Tech, ESG, trade and corporate culture.

XVIII. Industries and Interest Groups

Sector	Broad contemporary tendency	Critical qualification
Oil and gas	Republican	Employees, executives and PACs need not behave identically.
Renewable energy	Democratic-leaning	Regional variation remains important.
Technology	Historically Democratic-heavy, increasingly contested	Founders, executives and employees differ.
Finance	Genuinely mixed	Subsectors and occupation matter.
Lawyers	Democratic-heavy contribution patterns	Corporate legal practice varies.
Labor organizations	Strongly Democratic	Members vote less uniformly than organizations.
Agriculture	Republican	Commodity and regional differences matter.
Construction	Republican-leaning	Unionized trades complicate.
Defense	Comparatively balanced, often slight Republican tilt	Firms hedge politically and employees differ.
Healthcare	Often Democratic-leaning in aggregate	Physicians, nurses, executives and PACs differ.
Entertainment	Democratic	Management and labor operate through different mechanisms.
Real estate	Mixed with traditional Republican component	Metropolitan professional real estate can diverge.

The phrase "corporate America" should be treated as an analytical category only after separating lobbying, company PACs, executive contributions, employee contributions, professional occupations and voting behavior.

Labor institutions versus workers

OpenSecrets and other campaign-finance data show labor organizations strongly supporting Democrats institutionally, but election surveys show working-class and union-household voters becoming more divided. The distinction between organized labor as a policy network and working-class citizens as an electorate is essential.

Economic elites versus cultural elites

A financial executive and a university administrator may both be socially elite while holding different economic interests and institutional worldviews. Contemporary partisan conflict often divides different types of elite rather than elites from non-elites in a single linear hierarchy.

Table 14

Industry-by-industry political economy

Industry	Typical political pressures	Partisan pattern	Why aggregation misleads
Finance / Wall Street	Tax, capital regulation, monetary policy, securities law	Historically mixed; executives and subsectors differ	Hedge funds, banks, asset managers and retail finance face different regulation.
Private equity	Capital gains, carried interest, antitrust, healthcare rollups	Management often economically conservative; donations can be bipartisan	Portfolio-company employees need not share owner preferences.
Silicon Valley / Big Tech	AI, antitrust, privacy, immigration, content moderation, export controls	Employees historically Democratic; founders/executives increasingly heterogeneous	Corporate culture, founder politics and workforce politics diverge.
Oil and gas	Leasing, pipelines, permitting, climate rules	Strong Republican institutional alignment	Union workers and producing-state Democrats complicate.
Manufacturing	Tariffs, labor, energy, supply chains	Management often Republican; unionized labor more Democratic; trade has become cross-cutting	Industry varies by region and ownership.
Defense	Procurement, alliance policy, appropriations	Lobbying is bipartisan; strategic factions differ inside parties	National-security consensus can cross partisan donor patterns.
Pharmaceuticals	Patent policy, Medicare pricing, FDA, insurance	Lobbying bipartisan; Democrats more supportive of direct price negotiation	Scientists, executives, salesforces and shareholders differ.
Hospitals / healthcare	Medicare/Medicaid, insurance, labor	Institutional interests often favor program stability rather than pure partisanship	Physicians, hospital systems and insurers have distinct incentives.
Real estate	Interest rates, zoning, taxes, housing subsidies	Developer/owner politics often conservative; urban professionals more Democratic	Homeowners, renters, brokers and developers have different interests.
Agriculture	Farm programs, trade, immigration labor, environmental rules	Strong Republican electoral geography	Subsidy dependence complicates small-government ideology.
Small business	Taxes, regulation, credit, healthcare	Republican tilt in many surveys	Professional small firms in metros differ from rural retail/manufacturing.

Table 14 (continued)

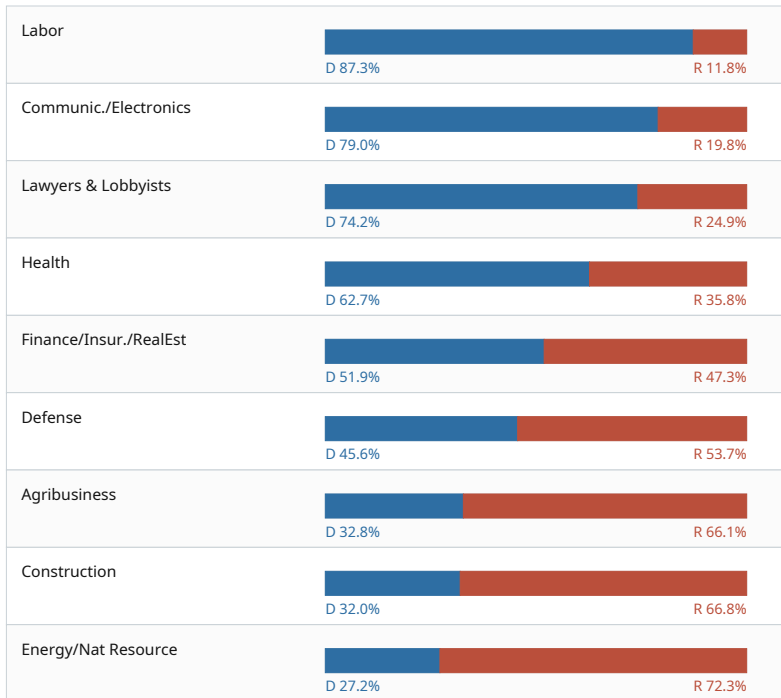
Industry	Typical political pressures	Partisan pattern	Why aggregation misleads
Media / entertainment	Copyright, unions, platform rules, cultural policy	Workforces and creative industries often Democratic	Ownership, editorial leadership and rank-and-file workers differ.

For campaign-finance analysis, firm PACs, executives, employees and lobbying should be separated; aggregate industry contribution data should not be described as corporations "voting." See OpenSecrets sector methodology and Bonica 2014.

Quantitative money-in-politics supplement, 2023-24

Campaign contributions and lobbying measure different channels of political activity. They should not be collapsed into a single partisan-interest score.

Party share of candidate/party contributions by sector



Selected federal lobbying totals, 2024

Pharma / health products	\$293.7m
Electronics mfg. / equip.	\$189.3m
Insurance	\$117.3m
Real estate	\$111.7m
Securities & investment	\$110.7m
Oil & gas	\$109.8m

Lobbying expenditures are disclosure-based advocacy costs, not campaign donations. A sector can lobby both parties while its candidate/party contributions lean in one direction.

METHOD. OpenSecrets sector totals for the 2023-24 cycle, FEC data released Feb. 6, 2025. Party percentages are based on contributions to candidates and parties and combine qualifying PAC and individual giving; independent expenditures are excluded from the party-share breakdown. Aggregate sector totals do not identify executives versus rank-and-file employees. Donor-level data are required for that distinction. Lobbying totals are a separate federal-disclosure channel and are shown separately.

Analytical implication: "business" is not one partisan actor. Finance was nearly balanced in candidate/party contribution shares, while labor and communications/electronics leaned heavily Democratic and energy, construction and agribusiness leaned heavily Republican. Those contribution patterns still do not reveal how employees vote, how executives lobby, or what policy a firm prefers on every issue.

Source: OpenSecrets, Interest Groups / Sector Totals, 2023-24 cycle; OpenSecrets federal-lobbying industry totals, 2024. See bibliography and methodology note on p. 50.

XIX. Foreign Policy and National Strategy

Competing strategic worldviews

Foreign policy is increasingly cross-cutting rather than perfectly partisan. The Democratic center remains closer to alliance-based liberal internationalism, while the Republican coalition contains a larger contemporary conflict between Reagan-style internationalism and America First nationalism.

Republican currents

- **Reagan internationalists:** alliances + military strength + U.S. leadership.
- **Neoconservatives:** willingness to use military power and shape international order.
- **Conventional national-security conservatives:** China deterrence, alliances and burden sharing.
- **America First:** sovereignty, economic nationalism and transactional commitments.
- **Restraint conservatives:** narrower commitments and intervention.

Democratic currents

- **Liberal internationalists:** alliances, multilateral coordination and deterrence.
- **Establishment Democrats:** pragmatic institutional internationalism.
- **Progressive internationalists:** alliances plus human rights, climate and skepticism toward military force.
- **Restraint progressives:** reduced military commitments and stronger legislative constraints.

China

China is one of the strongest areas of elite convergence. Both parties increasingly support semiconductor resilience, reduced strategic dependence, supply-chain security and military deterrence. Differences concern tariff scale, alliance coordination, human-rights framing, industrial policy and the desired degree of economic decoupling.

Ukraine, NATO and Europe

The Democratic center is more cohesive around NATO and sustained alliance-based support for Ukraine. Republican politics contains wider divergence between conventional hawks and America First or restraint factions. Foreign policy is therefore a domain in which within-party disagreements increasingly rival between-party disagreements.

Israel and the Middle East

Both coalitions contain strong pro-Israel constituencies, but Democratic voters contain a substantially larger critical or pro-Palestinian faction. Middle East policy demonstrates why America First should not simply be equated with isolationism: skepticism toward liberal international institutions can coexist with willingness to use military force under a national-interest rationale.

Strategic conclusion

The deepest foreign-policy difference is not intervention versus nonintervention. It concerns the role of alliances, international institutions, sovereignty, reciprocity and the definition of national interest. Both parties contain internal restraint and internationalist traditions.

Current strategic context, 2025-2026

EMPIRICAL FINDING The November 2025 National Security Strategy explicitly places "America First" at the center of the administration's strategic framework. Contemporary strategy should therefore be analyzed as a governing doctrine, not merely campaign rhetoric (White House 2025b). CFR's 2026 survey of grand-strategy schools distinguishes primacy, liberal internationalism, restraint, American nationalism and Trumpism, illustrating that major strategic differences also run within each party (Blackwill 2026).

China

Both parties have moved toward strategic competition with China, supporting semiconductor capacity, supply-chain resilience, export controls and deterrence. Democratic strategy typically emphasizes alliance coordination and calibrated de-risking; Republican strategy contains stronger broad-tariff and bilateral reciprocity currents. The convergence is therefore in diagnosis - China as a strategic competitor - more than in instruments.

Russia and Ukraine

Democratic elites have generally supported sustained alliance coordination and assistance to Ukraine, though progressive restraint voices question escalation and duration. Republican politics contains a wider divide between conventional hawks who treat Russian revisionism as a major alliance threat and America First or restraint-oriented factions that prioritize burden shifting, negotiation or narrower definitions of U.S. interest. The resulting cleavage is strongly intraparty as well as partisan.

NATO and Europe

The Democratic center generally views NATO as an institutional multiplier of U.S. power. Traditional Republican internationalists share that view but emphasize burden sharing, while America First currents are more transactional and skeptical of open-ended commitments. This is a difference in the assumed value of institutionalized alliances, not simply intervention versus isolation.

Israel and the Middle East

Both parties contain strong pro-Israel elites, but Democratic voters and activists include a much larger critical and pro-Palestinian constituency. Republican politics more consistently links Israel support to strategic, evangelical and civilizational frames. The Middle East therefore exposes a larger activist-establishment tension within Democrats than within Republicans, although realist and restraint factions exist on the right.

Iran

Republican foreign-policy factions are generally more skeptical of negotiated nuclear accommodation and more willing to use economic and military coercion. Democratic internationalists have been more receptive to negotiated constraints, while also supporting deterrence. The difference concerns the expected efficacy and legitimacy of diplomacy, sanctions and force rather than whether Iran poses strategic problems.

Taiwan

Cross-party concern about coercion against Taiwan is substantial. Differences concern the degree of strategic ambiguity, defense spending, economic restrictions on China and alliance coordination. The United States continues to operate under its one-China policy framework, the Taiwan Relations Act and unofficial relations through the American Institute in Taiwan (U.S. Department of State 2026).

North Korea

Both parties support deterrence and denuclearization as long-run objectives, but Republicans have shown greater openness in the Trump era to leader-level bilateral diplomacy, whereas Democratic administrations

have tended toward alliance coordination, sanctions and working-level diplomacy. The practical policy space is constrained by North Korea's nuclear status regardless of partisan doctrine.

Artificial intelligence as grand strategy

The 2025 AI Action Plan framed AI leadership in terms of innovation, infrastructure and international diplomacy/security, and a June 2026 national-security memorandum directed accelerated AI adoption across the national-security enterprise. Technology policy therefore increasingly links domestic political economy to geopolitical strategy (White House 2025c; White House 2026b).

Table 15

Foreign policy: elite-mass-roll-call crosswalk

The comparison below deliberately juxtaposes, rather than equates, mass opinion and legislative behavior. Survey attitudes, appropriation votes and grand-strategy doctrines answer different questions.

Domain	Mass opinion	House roll call, Apr. 20, 2024	What it shows
NATO	Favorable: Dem/lean Dem 75%; GOP/lean GOP 43%. Say membership benefits U.S.: 81% vs. 51%.	No directly comparable roll call in this table.	Large mass partisan gap, but majorities in both parties still saw membership as beneficial.
Ukraine	Say U.S. gives too much aid: GOP/lean GOP 49%; Dem/lean Dem 16%.	H.R. 8035: Democrats 210-0; Republicans 101-112, 1 present.	Very large Republican intraparty split at elite level; mass opinion also divided strongly by party.
Israel	No directly comparable measure from this NATO/Ukraine survey.	H.R. 8034: Republicans 193-21; Democrats 173-37.	Large majorities in both caucuses supported the supplemental, with dissent in both parties.
Indo-Pacific	No directly comparable measure in this survey.	H.R. 8036: Republicans 178-34; Democrats 207-0, 1 present.	Cross-party legislative support was considerably broader than on Ukraine.

Sources. Pew Research Center, Apr. 1-7, 2024, N=3,600 U.S. adults: NATO favorability and perceived benefit, and views of Ukraine aid. U.S. House Clerk Roll Calls 151 (Ukraine Security Supplemental, H.R. 8035), 152 (Israel Security Supplemental, H.R. 8034) and 146 (Indo-Pacific Security Supplemental, H.R. 8036), Apr. 20, 2024. Percentages are not calculated across unlike denominators; raw party vote counts are shown.

XX. Transformations Within Each Party

Table 16

From Reagan to Trump

Dimension	Reagan-era Republicanism	Trump-era Republicanism	Character of change
Free trade	Strongly favorable	Skeptical	Major
Tariffs	Generally skeptical	Central instrument	Major
Corporations	Close allies	Conditional relationship; conflict with culturally progressive firms	Significant
Immigration	Restriction plus reformist elements	Much more restrictionist	Major
NATO	Cornerstone	More transactional and contested	Major
Russia	Geopolitical enemy	More internally contested	Substantial
Federal power	Rhetorically limited	Selectively assertive	Substantial
Industrial policy	Limited	National-capacity orientation	Major
Working-class rhetoric	Important but secondary to market doctrine	Central	Major
Cultural politics	Traditionalism	Intensified culture-war focus	Continuity + intensification
Elites	Business establishment partly allied	Anti-establishment rhetoric central	Major

What survived Reaganism: tax reduction, judicial conservatism, religious conservatism, gun rights, deregulation and military-strength rhetoric. **What weakened:** free-trade orthodoxy, reflexive corporate alignment, immigration liberalization, alliance internationalism and deficit restraint as overriding doctrine.

Table 17

From Clinton to contemporary Democrats

Dimension	Clinton-era Democrats	Obama-era Democrats	Contemporary Democrats
Free trade	Strongly favorable	Qualified	Considerably more skeptical
Wall Street	Accommodation	Post-crisis regulation	Stronger populist and regulatory skepticism
Unions	Alliance weakened	Supportive	Renewed rhetorical and policy emphasis
Industrial policy	Limited	Selective	Central
Race	Civil-rights liberalism	Stronger pluralism	Systemic-equity debate
Immigration	Enforcement + reform	Reform + enforcement	Inclusion + enforcement tension
LGBT rights	Cautious	Major liberalization	Institutionalized support
Climate	Secondary	Significant	Core policy area
Welfare	Work-oriented reform	Safety-net defense	More expansive
Healthcare	Managed-market reform	ACA	ACA expansion and public-option factions
Technology	Optimism	Partnership	More regulation and antitrust concern
Antitrust	Restrained	Revival late	Stronger

The contemporary Democratic strategic contradiction is whether the party can remain culturally and professionally anchored in highly educated metropolitan America while rebuilding durable identification among noncollege working-class voters. The contemporary Republican contradiction is whether market liberalism can coexist indefinitely with economic nationalism, populism and strong state power in cultural and security domains.

Reagan-to-Trump: mechanisms of change

The transformation of Republicanism is not adequately described as abandonment of conservatism. It is a change in the hierarchy among conservative traditions. Tax reduction, deregulation, judicial conservatism, gun rights and religious conservatism remain powerful; free trade, corporate deference, immigration liberalization and automatic alliance internationalism have lost their former binding role. Populist nationalism supplies a new organizing language connecting borders, trade, culture and executive power.

Clinton-to-contemporary Democrats: mechanisms of change

Democratic transformation is likewise more than social liberalization. The party has moved away from several elements of 1990s market orthodoxy through industrial policy, stronger antitrust, labor-oriented policy, supply-chain strategy and greater skepticism toward China-centered economic integration. Yet private ownership, private insurance and market coordination remain foundational. The shift is therefore from neoliberal accommodation toward developmental liberalism rather than from capitalism to socialism.

XXI. The 2026 Snapshot: More Than Two Ideological Camps

Pew's 2026 political typology, based on a nationally representative survey of 10,357 adults and 30 political-value questions, identifies nine groups rather than two monolithic camps. Approximately one-sixth of each partisan coalition falls into value clusters typically associated with the other side of a simple left-right line.

Group	Share
Leftward Progressives	7%
Loyal Liberals	11%
Left-Out Left	12%
Order and Opportunity Left	18%
Tuned-Out Middle	9%
Pragmatic and Polite Right	11%
Unconventional Right	12%
Faith First Conservatives	12%
No Apologies Right	9%

Pew Research Center, *Beyond Red vs. Blue: The 2026 Political Typology*, June 10, 2026.

The two-party electoral system compresses numerous value configurations into two ballot coalitions. That compression is a major source of internal factional conflict.

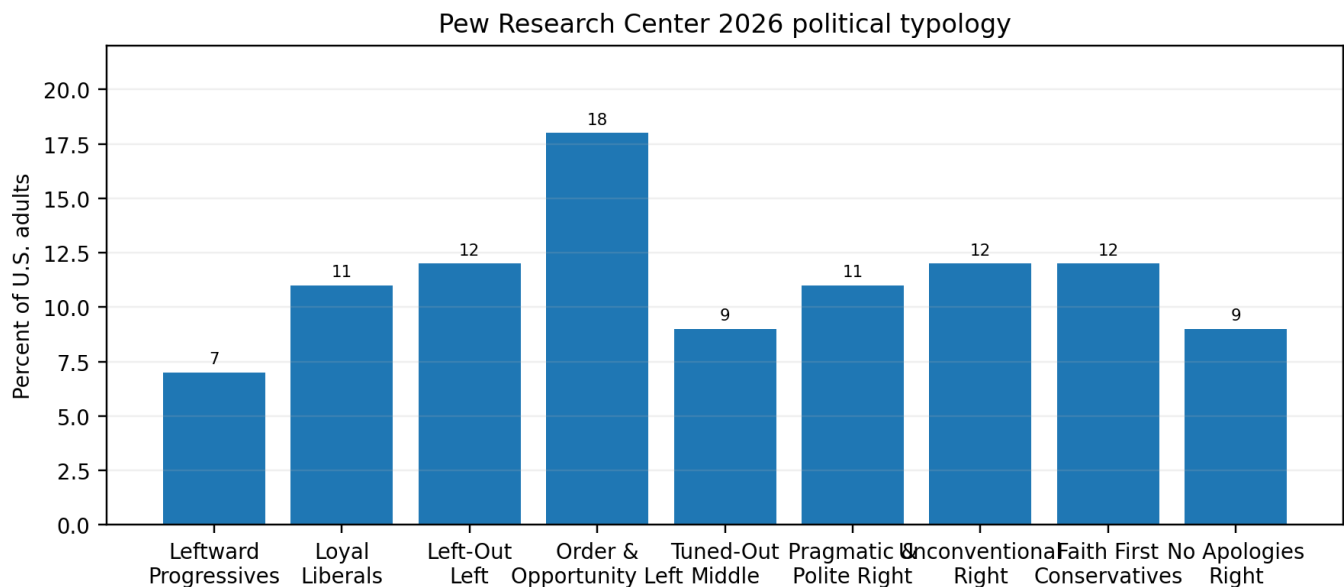


Figure 20. ne-group 2026 Pew political typology demonstrates ideological mixing beneath the two-party ballot structure.

Source and field dates. Pew Research Center political typology, survey of 10,357 U.S. adults conducted Nov. 17-30, 2025; report published June 10, 2026. The analysis also draws on follow-up surveys through April 2026. Group shares: 7, 11, 12, 18, 9, 11, 12, 12 and 9 percent respectively (Pew Research Center 2026b).

EMPIRICAL FINDING Roughly 15% of Republicans/Republican leaners fall into value clusters left of the typology's center and a similar share of Democrats fall into groups right of center. This does not mean the parties are ideologically identical; it means ordinary coalition members often hold cross-cutting issue combinations.

XXII. Fact Versus Partisan Stereotype

Table 19

Claim	Assessment	Empirical qualification
Democrats are socialist.	Mostly false	Mainstream Democratic politics accepts market capitalism; social-democratic factions remain minority currents.
Republicans are fascist.	False as a blanket classification	The Republican coalition cannot academically be reduced to fascism; authoritarian concerns should be analyzed through specific institutions and behavior, not categorical labeling.
Democrats hate capitalism.	False	The disagreement concerns regulation, distribution and institutional design.
Republicans only represent the rich.	False	The coalition contains a large noncollege and working-class constituency.
Democrats represent workers.	Partly true	Unions and many lower-income voters remain Democratic, but the party has no monopoly on workers.
Republicans represent workers.	Partly true	Republicans have strong noncollege support, but organized labor remains Democratic and workers are heterogeneous.
Democrats are secular.	Misleading	Many Democratic constituencies are deeply religious, especially Black Protestants.
Republicans are religious.	Partly true	Christian and religiously observant voters are disproportionately Republican; secular Republicans exist.
Democrats are globalists.	Misleading	They are generally more internationalist, not advocates of borderless politics.
Republicans are isolationists.	Mostly false	America First is distinct from nonintervention and includes military-strength factions.
Democrats favor unlimited immigration.	False	Democratic voters and officials support substantial border enforcement alongside legal pathways.
Republicans oppose immigration.	False	Many support legal or high-skilled immigration while opposing unauthorized migration.
Democrats oppose free speech.	Misleading	Conflicts concern scope, platform governance and rights collisions.
Republicans support free speech.	Partly true but incomplete	Strong speech rhetoric coexists with regulatory impulses in some cultural domains.
Republicans support small government.	Partly true	More anti-regulatory and anti-redistributive, but supportive of strong public power in border, security, policing, tariffs and selected cultural domains.
Democrats support big government.	Partly true	More services and regulation, often delivered through private-market mechanisms and tax incentives.

Classification rubric used in the stereotype table

The labels evaluate the empirical adequacy of blanket propositions. They are descriptive judgments about scope and evidence, not moral evaluations of parties, policies or voters.

False	The central proposition is contradicted by party documents, governing behavior and/or representative mass evidence; exceptions do not rescue the blanket claim.
Mostly false	A limited factional or issue-specific kernel exists, but the claim fails as a description of the coalition as a whole.
Misleading	The statement combines unlike concepts or levels, uses an ambiguous term, or omits major exceptions in a way that distorts the evidence.
Partly true	A meaningful average tendency exists, but major counterexamples, subgroup differences or level-of-party distinctions materially qualify it.
Substantially true	The tendency is supported across several independent evidence levels and is broad enough to be descriptively useful, while still not applying to every member.

Coding rule: when evidence differs by level - for example activists versus ordinary identifiers, or rhetoric versus enacted policy - the table defaults toward the more qualified label and states the source of the mismatch in the empirical-qualification column.

XXIII. American and European Left-Right Politics

Why Democrats are not simply a European center-left party

- weaker labor-party institutionalization;
- greater reliance on private healthcare and tax credits;
- a lower welfare-state baseline;
- stronger constitutional individualism;
- more ethnically plural coalition politics;
- more market liberalism inside the mainstream;
- stronger global military orientation.

Why Republicans are not simply a conventional European conservative party

- Second Amendment politics;
- evangelical influence;
- stronger anti-federal-government traditions;
- constitutional originalism;
- a distinct welfare-state history;
- distinctive racial and sectional history;
- federalism and presidentialism;
- post-2015 economic nationalism and America First politics.

Trump-era economic nationalism creates some parallels with European national-populist parties, but U.S. constitutional structure, gun politics, race, federalism and presidentialism make direct category substitution unreliable.

Twenty common errors for non-American observers

1. American liberal means socialist.
2. Democrat means European Labour or Social Democrat.
3. Republican means European Christian Democrat.
4. Republicans have always favored states' rights.
5. Democrats have always favored federal power.
6. Civil-rights realignment happened instantly in 1964.
7. The South became Republican for only one reason.
8. American class politics equals income politics.
9. Wealthy Americans are uniformly Republican.
10. Workers are uniformly Democratic.
11. Minorities vote as homogeneous blocs.
12. Hispanic politics is primarily immigration politics.
13. Religion uniformly produces Republican voting.
14. Secularism uniformly produces Democratic voting.
15. America First means no foreign military intervention.
16. Democratic internationalism means open-ended interventionism.
17. Republicans reject the welfare state.
18. Democrats seek state ownership of capitalism.
19. Independent voters are necessarily centrists.
20. Polarization means Americans disagree on every policy.

XXIV. Thirty Analytically Central Differences

The following ordering moves from deeper coalition structures toward more downstream policy manifestations. It is an analytical hierarchy of dimensions, not a normative ranking of either party.

Table 20

#	Dimension	Democratic coalition tendency	Republican coalition tendency
1	National identity	Pluralist-multicultural emphasis	Culturally thicker sovereignty emphasis
2	Social change	Greater acceptance of rapid reform	Greater skepticism of rapid change
3	Education	BA/postgraduate advantage	Noncollege advantage
4	Geography	Metropolitan strength	Rural/exurban strength
5	Religion	Religiously diverse + secular strength	Disproportionately Christian strength
6	Race	More multiracial coalition	Still more heavily White, increasingly diverse
7	Institutional trust	Greater confidence in expert institutions	Greater skepticism of professional institutions
8	Anti-establishment politics	Secondary / left variant	Much stronger contemporary current
9	Equality	Structural/substantive concerns	Formal/individual treatment
10	Liberty	Autonomy and equal participation	Noninterference and traditional rights
11	Administrative state	Greater acceptance	Greater skepticism
12	Federal civil-rights power	Stronger orientation	Narrower orientation
13	Immigration	Incorporation + enforcement	Restriction + sovereignty
14	Family / cultural norms	Greater pluralism	Greater traditionalism
15	Guns	Regulation	Rights-centered framework
16	Abortion	Reproductive autonomy	Fetal-life and regulatory authority
17	Political economy	Regulated-distributive capitalism	Lower-tax capitalism + nationalist-developmental wing
18	Labor	Institutional support	Right-to-work and management flexibility
19	Corporate politics	Sectorally fragmented	Sectorally fragmented
20	Trade	Managed internationalism	Increasingly protectionist nationalism
21	Industrial policy	Climate / technology development	Manufacturing / national security
22	Climate	Aggressive mitigation	Lower regulatory priority
23	Energy	Transition	Production / abundance
24	Crime	Reform / balance	Order / toughness
25	Education governance	Public institutional model	Parental choice
26	Jurisprudence	Evolving/living traditions more common	Originalist/textualist movement stronger
27	Voting	Access emphasis	Integrity / control emphasis
28	Media ecology	More dispersed institutional sources	More concentrated conservative counter-establishment ecosystem
29	Foreign policy	Alliance internationalism	Intraparty nationalism-internationalism split
30	Party organizational logic	Group coalition with ideological development	Historically stronger ideological movement, increasingly transformed by populism

XXV. Comprehensive 137-Dimension Comparison Matrix

The table describes coalition tendencies and institutional patterns, not essential attributes of individual citizens. Significant internal exceptions exist on nearly every dimension.

Table 21

#	Dimension	Democratic coalition	Republican coalition	Underlying cleavage / caveat
1	Federal welfare	broader	narrower	scope of social insurance
2	Administrative agencies	more trusting	more skeptical	expertise/accountability
3	Regulation	more accepting	less accepting	market vs. public constraints
4	Federal civil-rights enforcement	stronger	narrower	national rights authority
5	Executive administration	technocratic orientation	politically centralized orientation	bureaucracy vs. presidential control
6	Federalism	rights-nationalizing more often	state autonomy more salient	location of authority
7	Income taxation	more progressive	lower	distribution
8	Corporate taxation	higher	lower	investment/redistribution
9	Capital taxation	higher	lower	capital formation
10	Estate tax	preserve/expand factions	reduce	inheritance
11	Redistribution	greater	lesser	equality/desert
12	Minimum wage	higher	more market/state flexibility	labor markets
13	Union organizing	supportive	skeptical	bargaining power
14	Collective bargaining	supportive	skeptical	labor institutions
15	Right-to-work	generally oppose	generally support	union security
16	Workplace regulation	stronger	lighter	employer/worker authority
17	Social Security	protect/expand wing	protect with fiscal tension	mass consensus constrains both
18	Medicare	protect/expand	protect/reform tensions	seniors
19	Medicaid	expand	constrain/work rules	means-tested welfare
20	SNAP	broader	tighter	redistribution
21	Child credits	more refundable	more tax/family-oriented	family policy design
22	ACA	protect/expand	reform/reduce	health state
23	Private insurance	retain/regulate	retain/market preference	important consensus
24	Drug pricing	negotiation	mixed	populist overlap
25	Public schools	institutional emphasis	choice emphasis	governance
26	Teachers unions	allies	adversarial	interest groups
27	School vouchers	skeptical	supportive	parental choice
28	Charter schools	mixed	favorable	partial overlap
29	Higher education	greater trust	greater skepticism	credentials/culture
30	Student debt relief	more favorable	more skeptical	intergenerational distribution
31	Affirmative action	more supportive	oppose	group remedies
32	DEI	more supportive	oppose/restrict	equality model
33	Race remedies	institutional/group-conscious	individual/colorblind	unit of justice
34	Voting Rights enforcement	stronger	narrower	federalism
35	Voter ID	more skeptical/conditional	supportive	access/security
36	Mail voting	expansive	more restrictive	administration
37	Early voting	expansive	tighter safeguards	administration
38	Campaign finance regulation	more support	more skepticism	speech/corruption
39	Gerrymandering reform	more support	less national reform	representation
40	Filibuster reform	larger reform faction	preserve under current incentives	institutional control
41	Court expansion	minority/open debate	oppose	judicial structure
42	Originalism	minority	dominant conservative jurisprudence	interpretation
43	Textualism	widely used too	stronger ideological identity	statutory interpretation
44	Living constitutionalism	more accepted	rejected label	constitutional change
45	Agency deference	more supportive	skeptical	expertise/courts
46	Privacy	reproductive/digital emphasis	digital/property plus security exceptions	rights domains
47	Abortion	legal access	restrictions	autonomy/life
48	Same-sex marriage	strongly supportive	coalition more divided	gap narrowed
49	Transgender rights	broader	more restrictive	newer cleavage

Table 21 (continued)

#	Dimension	Democratic coalition	Republican coalition	Underlying cleavage / caveat
50	Gender identity	more flexible	sex-based conception	ontology/culture
51	Religious exemptions	narrower when conflicting with civil rights	broader	rights collision
52	Church-state separation	stronger	more accommodationist	public religion
53	Parental authority	balanced with institutions	stronger emphasis	schools/family
54	Family pluralism	greater	traditional family emphasis	social order
55	Childcare	public subsidy	tax/private/family approaches	family policy
56	Guns	regulation	rights	constitutional/cultural
57	Background checks	stronger	mixed	some mass overlap
58	Assault-weapon restrictions	support	oppose	Second Amendment
59	Concealed carry	more regulation	broader right	self-defense
60	Red-flag laws	more favorable	more skeptical	public safety/due process
61	Police	reform orientation	order orientation	authority
62	Bail reform	greater support	greater skepticism	risk/public safety
63	Sentencing reform	more support	mixed/tougher tendency	punishment
64	Death penalty	more opposition	more support	punishment
65	Immigration enforcement	balanced with inclusion	highly prioritized	sovereignty
66	Deportation	targeted	much broader	membership
67	Asylum	broader	narrower	humanitarian/security
68	Legal immigration	broadly favorable	skills/selectivity emphasis	labor/nation
69	Citizenship pathway	more favorable	more skeptical	membership
70	DACA	support	more divided/opposed	childhood migration
71	Multiculturalism	stronger	assimilation more salient	national identity
72	Nationalism	more skeptical	more favorable	nationhood
73	Patriotism	civic-plural style	traditional-national style	symbolic identity
74	Climate mitigation	high priority	lower priority	risk perception
75	Fossil fuels	transition	expansion	energy economy
76	Renewable subsidies	favorable	skeptical	industrial policy
77	Nuclear	increasingly favorable	favorable	partial convergence
78	Environmental regulation	stronger	lighter	administrative state
79	Electric vehicles	more subsidy/regulation	more market skepticism	technology transition
80	Industrial policy	green/technology	manufacturing/security	convergence in tools
81	Trade	strategic managed trade	tariff nationalism	globalization
82	Free-trade orthodoxy	weakened	much more weakened	post-1990s shift
83	Tariffs	targeted	central	economic nationalism
84	China	strategic competition	strategic competition	partial convergence
85	Wall Street	regulatory relationship	business/populist tension	finance politics
86	Big Tech	ally/regulatory tension	cultural antagonist/business tension	technology power
87	Antitrust	progressive focus	populist-tech focus	market power
88	AI regulation	safety/industrial strategy	innovation/competition	emerging
89	Digital privacy	regulatory	libertarian/security tension	data governance
90	Universities	greater confidence	greater skepticism	institutional trust
91	Scientists	greater trust	lower trust	expert authority
92	Mainstream journalism	greater trust	much lower trust	information authority
93	Fox ecosystem	weak	strong	media asymmetry
94	Public broadcasting	stronger	weaker	media trust
95	Organized religion	coalition-diverse	Christian-heavy	religious structure
96	White evangelicalism	weak	very strong	religion/race
97	Religious nones	very strong	weak	secularization
98	Black Protestants	strong	weak	race/religion
99	Urban cores	very strong	weak	density
100	Rural areas	weak	very strong	geography
101	Suburbs	competitive/Democratic gains	competitive	heterogeneous
102	College graduates	strong	weaker	education
103	Postgraduates	very strong	weaker	credentials
104	Noncollege voters	weaker	strong	diploma divide

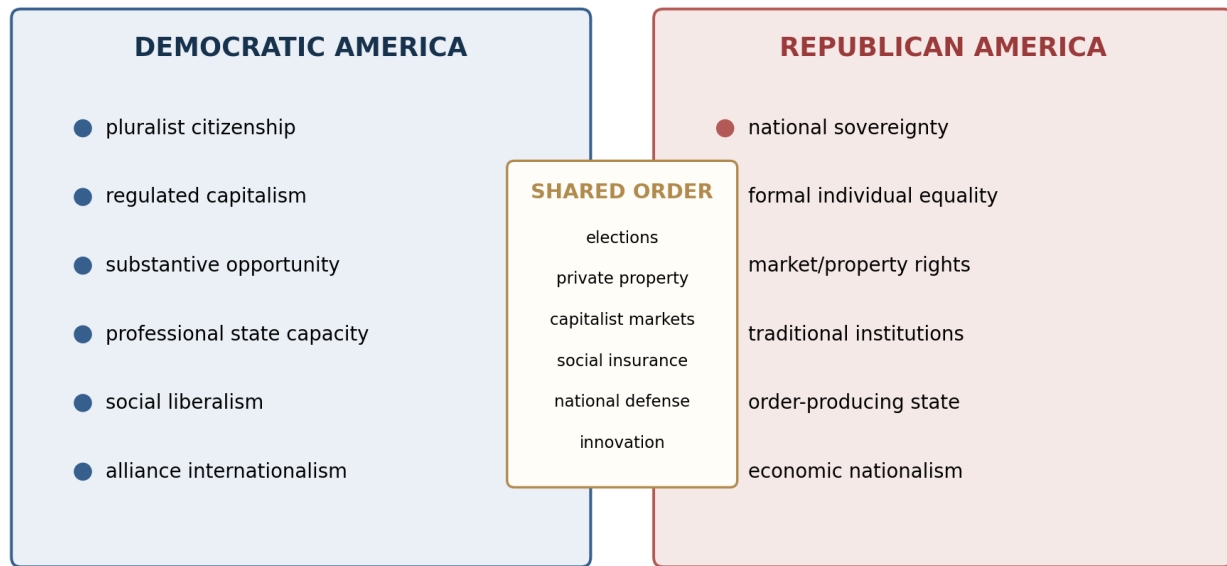
Table 21 (continued)

#	Dimension	Democratic coalition	Republican coalition	Underlying cleavage / caveat
105	Black voters	very strong	minority but gains	racial history
106	Hispanic voters	advantage narrowed	increasingly competitive	heterogeneity
107	Asian voters	advantage	minority/growing GOP share	heterogeneity
108	White voters	weaker	stronger	race/education/religion
109	Women	stronger	weaker	gender gap
110	Men	weaker	stronger	gender gap
111	NATO	stronger coalition consensus	greater internal conflict	foreign policy
112	Ukraine assistance	more supportive	more divided	internationalism
113	Israel	support + larger critical faction	stronger coalition consensus	Middle East
114	Military primacy	internationalist/restraint divide	hawk/America First divide	intraparty conflict
115	International institutions	more favorable	more skeptical	sovereignty
116	Sovereignty language	lower salience	higher salience	nationalism
117	Populism	secondary/left variant	central	elite conflict
118	Technocracy	stronger	distrusted	expertise
119	Cultural traditionalism	weaker	stronger	social order
120	Rapid social change	more accepting	more skeptical	tempo of change
121	Institutional reform	greater appetite	greater preservation of many structures	constitutional design
122	Organized labor institutions	strong alliance	weak alliance	interest groups
123	Small-business identity	mixed	stronger	entrepreneurship
124	Professional-managerial occupations	stronger	weaker overall	institutional location
125	Agriculture	weaker	stronger	economic geography
126	Oil/gas industry	weaker	stronger	energy
127	Technology employees	stronger historically	growing competition	professional culture
128	Finance professionals	mixed	mixed	subsector variation
129	Religious liberty litigation	pluralism/nondiscrimination balance	exemption/autonomy emphasis	rights collision
130	Gun culture	less integrated into coalition identity	more integrated	social identity
131	National-history narratives	critical/pluralist tendencies	continuity/patriotic tendencies	historical memory
132	Elite institutions	greater trust	anti-establishment skepticism	status/institutions
133	Federal police/security power	civil-liberties/reform tension	order/security emphasis	coercive state
134	Tariff revenue/protection	selective	central under Trump-era nationalism	political economy
135	Housing policy	subsidy + supply reforms	market/localism + supply	cross-cutting emerging issue
136	AI/automation distribution	labor/professional protection emerging	innovation + worker-nationalist tension	future cleavage
137	Global alliances	institutional multiplier	conditional/transactional tendency	international order

Matrix entries are modal coalition tendencies. They should be read alongside the factional, historical and elite-versus-mass qualifications in the main text.

XXVI. The "Two Americas" Model

THE "TWO AMERICAS" MODEL - HEURISTIC IDEAL TYPES



Differentiated coalitions can still share major institutions and cross-cutting citizens.

Figure 21. types clarify the logic of coalition conflict while preserving the reality of shared institutions and cross-cutting citizens.

Table 22

Democratic America - ideal type

Dimension	Ideal-type tendency
Citizen	Autonomous individual situated within historically unequal institutions.
Government	Legitimate instrument for guaranteeing rights and correcting market and social failures.
Markets	Productive but politically constructed and regulable.
Capitalism	Beneficial when competitive and socially constrained.
Equality	Formal equality plus substantively meaningful opportunity.
Community	Pluralist, diverse and often metropolitan.
Family	Multiple legitimate structures.
Diversity	Constitutive of contemporary national identity.
Expertise	Presumptively valuable but democratically accountable.
Education	Public good and mobility institution.
Religion	Protected within a religiously plural state.
Nation	Civic and multicultural.
World	Alliances and rules can multiply American power.

Republican America - ideal type

Dimension	Ideal-type tendency
Citizen	Responsible individual embedded in family, community and nation.
Government	Necessary but dangerous when distant or bureaucratically autonomous.
Markets	Primary organizing mechanism, increasingly subordinated to strategic national interest in selected domains.

Table 22 (continued)

Dimension	Ideal-type tendency
Capitalism	Core institution, with globalized corporate capitalism increasingly contested by populists.
Equality	Equal legal treatment rather than engineered group outcomes.
Community	Local, familial, religious and national.
Family	Foundational social institution.
Diversity	Accepted with stronger expectations of assimilation and cohesion.
Expertise	Useful but potentially self-interested and unaccountable.
Education	Family and community authority should constrain professional institutions.
Religion	Legitimate source of public morality.
Nation	Historically rooted civic-cultural community.
World	International commitments judged by reciprocity and national advantage.

"Two Americas" is analytically useful as an ideal-type model of coalitional differentiation, but empirically false if interpreted as two sealed civilizations. Millions of Americans occupy cross-cutting social spaces.

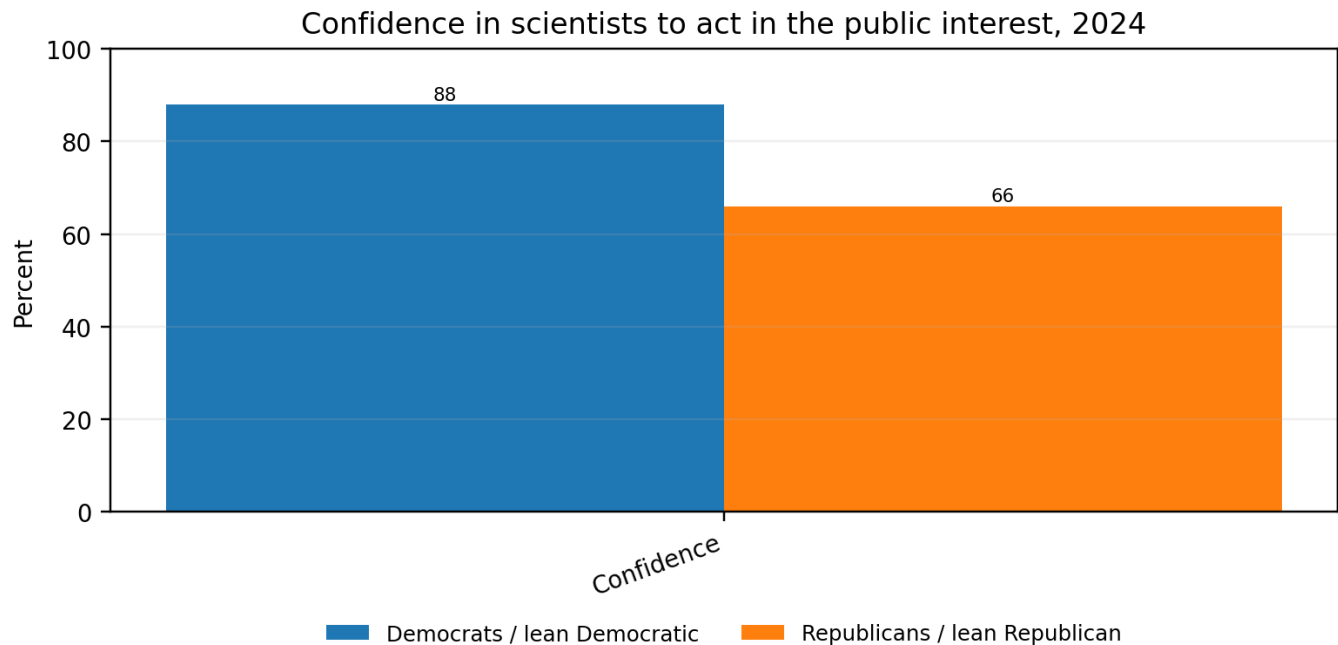


Figure 22. Coalitional-trust differences are large but not absolute.

Source. Pew Research Center, survey conducted Oct. 21-27, 2024 (report Nov. 14, 2024). Confidence in scientists to act in the public interest: Democrats/leaners 88%; Republicans/leaners 66%. The Republican figure itself cautions against the stereotype that Republicans uniformly reject science (Pew Research Center 2024g).

XXVII. Testing the Deepest-Divide Hypotheses

Table 23

Hypothesis	Supporting logic	Contradictory evidence	Assessment
A. Equality vs. liberty	Explains taxation, redistribution and civil-rights conflict.	Both parties invoke both values; difference is often meaning and priority.	Important but insufficient.
B. Progress vs. tradition	Explains family, sexuality, religion and education.	Does not explain tariffs, antitrust or all economic shifts.	Powerful cultural hypothesis.
C. Cosmopolitanism vs. nationalism	Explains immigration and international institutions.	Democrats also use economic nationalism; Republicans remain internationally engaged.	Increasingly important but incomplete.
D. Expert governance vs. populism	Explains agency, university, science and media conflict.	Both parties use experts and populist appeals.	One of the strongest emerging cleavages.
E. Pluralism vs. social cohesion	Explains immigration, religion and cultural policy.	Neither side rejects either value absolutely.	Deep identity cleavage.
F. Metropolitan professional vs. rural/small-town America	Strong geographic support.	Many Republicans are metropolitan and many Democrats are nonmetropolitan.	Structural but incomplete.
G. Multicultural vs. traditional national identity	Explains historical narratives, immigration and schooling.	Both coalitions use civic-American language.	Among the deepest cultural cleavages.
H. Competing class coalitions	Explains diploma divide and occupational sorting.	Class must include education, assets and occupation, not income only.	Core structural mechanism.
I. Competing moral worldviews	Explains authority, sanctity, family and rights priorities.	Psychology cannot explain institutional history alone.	Useful micro-level mechanism.
J. Identity outweighs policy	Supported by affective polarization and negative partisanship.	Major substantive policy differences remain.	Increasingly important but not total.

Integrated explanation

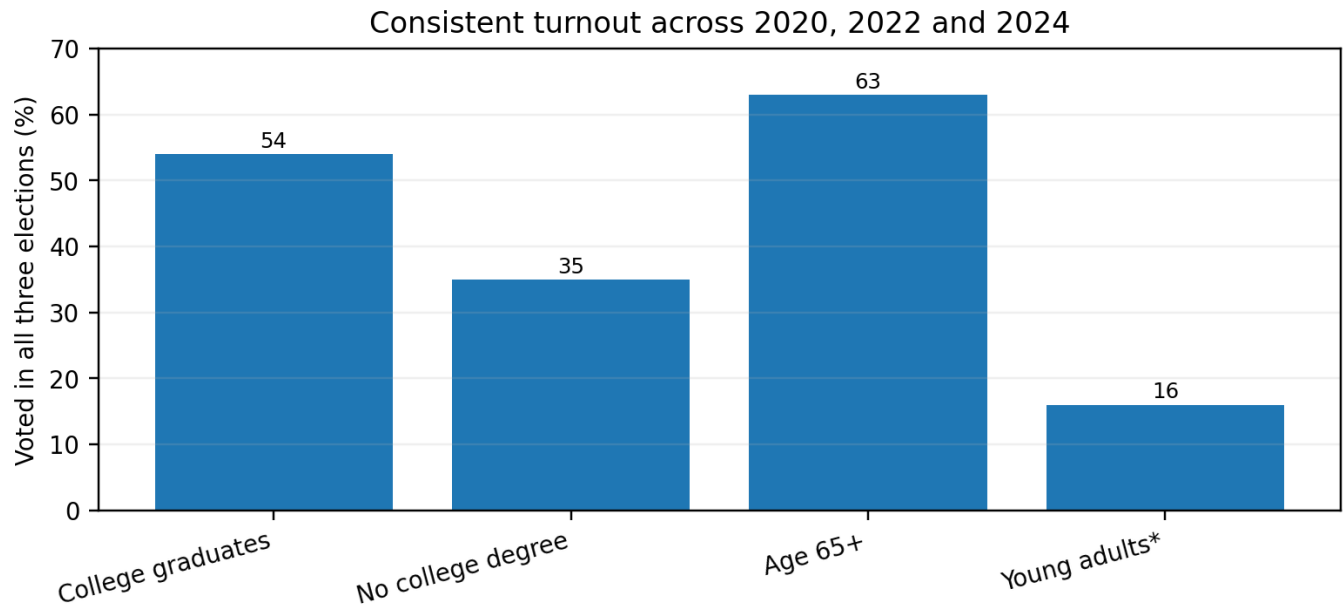
Partisan alignment = social identity x education x race x religion x geography x economic interests x cultural orientation x institutional incentives x elite mobilization x historical path dependence.

Multiplication is conceptually important. When several dimensions point in the same direction, partisan identity becomes unusually stable. A rural, evangelical, noncollege, gun-owning and culturally traditional voter faces fewer cross-pressures than a voter whose religion, occupation, education and economic interests point toward different coalitions. The same logic applies on the Democratic side.

Cross-pressured groups

Group	What can pull Democratic	What can pull Republican
Religious minority working class	Labor, healthcare, anti-discrimination	Family/cultural conservatism, crime, entrepreneurship
Affluent metropolitan professionals	Social liberalism, institutional trust	Tax and market preferences
Unionized White workers	Labor institutions and social insurance	Cultural conservatism and national identity
Hispanic Catholics	Economic policy and immigration incorporation	Religion, family, entrepreneurship and border concerns
Asian small-business constituencies	Immigration and pluralism	Taxation, crime and affirmative-action disputes
Rural Black voters	Civil-rights coalition history	Rural cultural environment and some social conservatism
Suburban professionals	Institutional moderation and social liberalism	Tax and business concerns

Participation as a hidden multiplier



*Young adults old enough to have been eligible for all three elections.

Figure 23. Coalitions are shaped not only by preference but by differential participation.

Source. Pew validated-voter panel analysis. Among citizens eligible for all three 2020, 2022 and 2024 elections, 54% of college graduates versus 35% of noncollege adults voted in all three; 63% of those 65+ did so, compared with 16% of young adults old enough to have been eligible for all three (Pew Research Center 2025d).

ANALYTICAL INFERENCE Any theory of coalition power must therefore model **preference x eligibility x registration x turnout x district geography**. A demographic group can move toward a party in opinion surveys without producing equivalent electoral change if turnout remains low or geographically inefficient.

XXVIII. Future of the Two-Party System: Conditional Scenarios

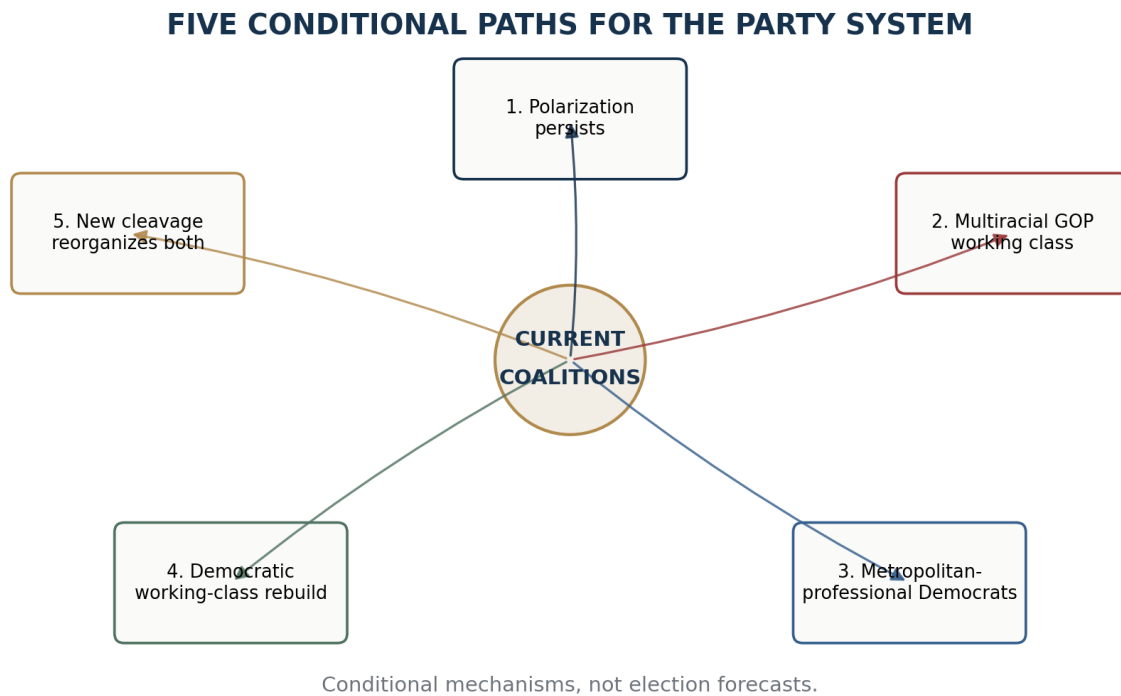


Figure 24. are conditional mechanisms to monitor over 10-20 years, not forecasts of election outcomes.

Scenario 1 - Current polarization persists

Mechanism: education, religion, geography and identity continue reinforcing one another. **Supporting indicators:** a stable multi-election diploma divide, persistent urban-rural separation and continuing religious sorting. **Weakening developments:** a major external shock or a new economic cleavage that cross-cuts current identities. **Possible institutional consequence:** continued nationalization and judicial/executive conflict.

Scenario 2 - Republicans consolidate a durable multiracial working-class coalition

Mechanism: education and cultural worldview become more predictive than racial identity. **Indicators:** persistent Republican gains among Hispanic, Black, Asian and White noncollege voters across multiple cycles and in party identification rather than only one presidential vote. **Weakening developments:** economic policies perceived as disproportionately favoring capital or cultural policies that alienate new constituencies. **Possible consequence:** a less racially homogeneous and more explicitly class-populist Republican coalition.

Scenario 3 - Democrats become increasingly metropolitan-professional

Mechanism: higher education and professional socialization continue dominating partisan sorting. **Indicators:** further Democratic strength among postgraduates, professionals and affluent suburbs. **Risk:** increased cultural distance from noncollege constituencies. **Possible consequence:** a more technocratic, institution-oriented and metropolitan Democratic coalition.

Scenario 4 - Democrats rebuild a broader working-class coalition

Mechanism: housing, wages, healthcare, labor rights and industrial development override cultural distance. **Indicators:** sustained Democratic gains among noncollege voters across racial groups. **Constraint:** cultural and

institutional distrust may limit economic persuasion. **Possible consequence:** partial reconstruction of class-based Democratic politics under very different demographic conditions from the New Deal era.

Scenario 5 - A new cleavage reorganizes both parties

Mechanism: AI, automation, housing scarcity, fiscal stress, geopolitical conflict with China or another issue divides both existing coalitions internally. **Indicators:** durable cross-party movement and new policy-demanding networks. **Weakening condition:** the issue remains secondary or is absorbed by current identities. **Possible consequence:** genuine partisan realignment.

Artificial intelligence as a potential cross-cutting cleavage

AI is especially capable of producing an unfamiliar alignment because it could place technology capital, credentialed professionals, displaced white-collar labor, manual labor, national-security industries and local economies into combinations that do not map cleanly onto current party identities. A genuine realignment becomes most plausible when a new high-salience question divides both existing coalitions internally.

Table 24

Scenario indicators dashboard

Scenario	Evidence that would strengthen it	Evidence that would weaken it	Key groups to watch	Potential institutional consequence
Current polarization persists	Stable diploma, religion and geography gaps across several cycles	Large cross-cutting issue realignment	Suburbs, noncollege minorities, young adults	Continued nationalization and judicial/executive conflict
Durable multiracial GOP working-class coalition	Republican gains among noncollege Black/Hispanic/Asian voters persist in party ID and midterms	2024 gains reverse with turnout/candidate changes	Hispanic working class, Black men, Asian small business	Race becomes less predictive relative to education/class
Professional-metropolitan Democratic consolidation	Further gains among postgraduates, affluent suburbs and professionals	Working-class recovery or professional defection	Suburban professionals, knowledge workers	Greater technocratic and institutional orientation
Democratic working-class reconstruction	Durable gains among noncollege voters tied to wages/housing/health/labor	Cultural distrust overwhelms economic appeals	Union households, service workers, industrial regions	Revived distributive coalition with different racial composition from New Deal era
New cleavage reorganizes both parties	AI, housing or China creates high-salience conflict splitting both coalitions internally	New issues are absorbed into existing identities	AI professionals, displaced workers, renters/homeowners, tech capital	Potential genuine realignment and factional restructuring

FORWARD-LOOKING SCENARIO Artificial intelligence is unusually capable of cross-cutting current alignments because it may redistribute rents and employment across both professional and manual labor while creating conflicts over energy, data centers, regulation, national security and intellectual property. The direction of partisan capture is genuinely uncertain.

XXIX. Explicit Answers to the Twenty Final Questions

1. What is the deepest difference between Democrats and Republicans?

The deepest difference concerns how legitimate authority should organize social change, membership, rights and hierarchy in contemporary America - not one simple policy axis.

2. How do their economic philosophies differ?

Democrats generally favor regulated, redistributive and increasingly developmental capitalism. Republicans combine market conservatism with an increasingly important nationalist-developmental tendency.

3. How do their conceptions of the state differ?

Democrats accept more social-regulatory and administrative state capacity. Republicans oppose many forms of autonomous regulatory and redistributive power but favor strong state power in border, security and selected national-economic or cultural domains.

4. Do they embody different assumptions about human behavior and social order?

Partly. Democratic traditions assign comparatively greater explanatory weight to institutions and structural context; Republican traditions assign comparatively greater weight to personal responsibility, family and inherited institutions.

5. How do their understandings of liberty differ?

Democratic liberty more often stresses autonomy and equal participation; Republican liberty more often stresses noninterference and historically protected individual or associational rights.

6. How do their understandings of equality differ?

Democrats more readily interpret equality substantively and structurally; Republicans more readily interpret it procedurally and individually.

7. How do their conceptions of legitimate authority differ?

Democrats generally accept professional expertise and administrative capacity more readily. Republicans increasingly emphasize electoral, familial, local, constitutional and executive accountability.

8. How do they define American identity differently?

Democratic nationhood is comparatively pluralistic and multicultural. Republican nationhood places comparatively greater weight on historical continuity, sovereignty and cultural cohesion.

9. Who constitutes the actual social base of each party?

Democratic support is disproportionately metropolitan, racially and religiously diverse, highly educated, professional and female. Republican support is disproportionately rural/exurban, Christian, noncollege, male and culturally traditional, while remaining strong among many business constituencies and gaining portions of minority working-class electorates.

10. Why has education become such an important political cleavage?

Because education increasingly structures occupation, residential environment, social networks, institutional exposure, cultural values and trust in expertise.

11. How is class politics changing?

Class has become multidimensional. Education, occupation, assets, employment relations and cultural capital increasingly cross-cut income.

12. How is racial politics changing?

Race remains central but is becoming less mechanically deterministic as education, gender, religion, class and national origin create greater intra-group variation.

13. How politically important is religion today?

It remains one of the strongest predictors of partisanship, especially when denomination, race and religious practice are considered together.

14. Why has the metropolitan-rural divide become so significant?

Because geography bundles economic structure, diversity, density, education, institutions, migration, religion and cultural networks.

15. How different are the cultural worlds of the two coalitions?

Meaningfully different in media, institutions, religion, education and social norms, but not mutually sealed.

16. How extensive is contemporary polarization?

Large among elites, significant among citizens and especially powerful affectively and socially; it is also geographic, educational, religious and institutional.

17. Has partisan identity become more important than policy disagreement?

Identity increasingly structures how policy disagreement is interpreted and motivates negative partisanship, but genuine policy disagreement remains indispensable.

18. Is the United States dividing into two cultural-political blocs?

Yes in the sense of increasingly differentiated coalitional systems; no in the sense of two homogeneous populations or separate societies.

19. Which dimensions of each party have changed most dramatically over time?

For Republicans: southern realignment, evangelical incorporation, Reagan fusionism and Trump-era nationalism/populism. For Democrats: New Deal state-building, civil-rights incorporation, post-1960s social liberalism, professional-educational sorting and renewed industrial policy.

20. What are the most plausible directions of future partisan realignment?

The central uncertainty is whether current racial, educational and class alignments stabilize or whether education, technology, housing, AI, working-class politics or another cleavage cross-cuts race and reorganizes both coalitions.

XXX. Final Integrated Theory

The Democratic-Republican conflict has moved beyond a conventional argument about marginal changes in public policy. But describing the United States simply as "two nations" exaggerates the evidence. The better formulation is that contemporary American politics contains two increasingly differentiated coalition systems whose divisions reach into policy, identity, morality, institutions, geography, religion, education and national meaning, while substantial ideological heterogeneity and social overlap continue to exist inside both.

Where the coalitions genuinely represent competing models of America

The distinction is strongest around national identity, social change, race, religion, gender, immigration, guns, education, administrative expertise, constitutional rights and metropolitan-rural social organization. Here partisan conflict increasingly resembles competition between rival models of legitimate social order.

Where substantial consensus remains

Both coalitions continue broadly to operate within constitutional electoral government, private property, capitalist markets, major social-insurance institutions, legal immigration in some form, national defense, technological innovation and a large existing federal state. Conflict often concerns design, degree, administration and priority rather than wholesale abolition.

Where apparent differences are amplified by elites or media

Citizens frequently overestimate the demographic and ideological extremity of the opposing coalition. Mixed ideological groups remain substantial, and many voters combine positions that party elites classify as inconsistent. Activists and media figures are often more ideologically coherent and politically visible than ordinary identifiers.

Which differences are structurally durable

Education, geography, religion, national identity, racial history and institutional trust are especially durable because they are embedded in social institutions rather than candidate rhetoric. They are therefore less likely to disappear solely because leadership changes.

What could reorganize the party system

The strongest potential realignment variables include a multiracial working-class Republican expansion, Democratic recovery among noncollege voters, AI and automation, housing and generational wealth, immigration, China and economic security, religious change, and gender divergence among younger adults.

Answer to the final integrated question

The Democratic-Republican conflict remains a competition between electoral parties operating within a shared constitutional structure. But it increasingly also represents a contest between different understandings of legitimate authority, social equality, national membership, historical memory, family, religion, expertise, capitalism, sovereignty and America's role in the world.

The Democratic coalition's characteristic institutional project combines **pluralistic citizenship + regulated capitalism + stronger substantive-equality mechanisms + professional administrative capacity + culturally liberal institutions + alliance-centered internationalism.**

The Republican coalition's emerging institutional project combines **national sovereignty + individual/formal equality + market institutions + selective economic nationalism + traditional social authority + strong border/order functions + skepticism toward autonomous progressive-professional institutions.**

These are ideal types rather than total descriptions. Democrats must reconcile a highly educated professional constituency with their historical aspiration to working-class representation. Republicans must reconcile market liberalism with economic nationalism, libertarian suspicion of government with populist uses of government, and Reagan internationalism with America First. Those contradictions are possible sources of the next realignment.

The deepest divide is not finally left versus right, liberty versus equality, or workers versus elites. It is better conceived as a **multidimensional contest over membership, authority, status, social change and political economy in a diverse postindustrial constitutional republic.**

Five foundational questions behind contemporary partisan conflict

Who belongs?

Immigration, citizenship, race and national identity.

Who should rule?

Voters, courts, presidents, experts, agencies, states, parents and local institutions.

What is owed?

Taxation, welfare, labor, healthcare and distributive justice.

Which liberties take precedence?

Religion, speech, equality, privacy, guns, reproductive autonomy and property.

What should America become?

A progressively reconstructed pluralistic society, a culturally continuous sovereign republic, or in practice some unstable synthesis of both.

That final question explains why contemporary partisan conflict frequently feels deeper than ordinary policy disagreement. Yet the persistence of heterogeneous groups documented by ANES, CES and Pew cautions against treating political identity as destiny. America is not composed of two peoples. It is composed of overlapping populations increasingly organized by two highly nationalized political coalitions.

Appendix A. Elite-Mass and Governing-Behavior Audit

Table 25

This appendix operationalizes the rule that "party position" is not a single variable. For each domain, analysts should identify the relevant level before making a partisan claim.

Domain	Elected officials	Leadership / platform	Activists / donors	Interest groups / policy networks	Ordinary partisans	Frequent divergence
Taxes	Roll calls highly polarized	Clear platform separation	Donor preferences often more intense	Business vs labor/redistribution networks	Less ideologically coherent	Voters may favor high-income taxes and own tax cuts simultaneously
Social Security	Leadership avoids direct cuts	Both promise protection	Fiscal groups seek reform	Senior groups defend benefits	Very strong bipartisan protection	Elite fiscal concern exceeds mass demand for retrenchment
Immigration	Polarized on enforcement/legalization	Sharp rhetorical gap	Activist poles stronger	Business, restrictionist and rights groups cross-cut	Border-security overlap plus deportation gap	Mass opinion more mixed than activist framing
Trade	Executive authority increasingly central	GOP tariff turn; Democratic managed trade	Ideological donors split	Sector-specific lobbying	Views sensitive to prices/jobs/China framing	Firm interests and voter nationalism may conflict
Abortion	Strong partisan separation	High-salience platform divide	Activists often more absolutist	Reproductive-rights and pro-life networks	Many voters support intermediate restrictions/access	Intensity and policy specificity differ
Guns	Strong separation	Clear rights/regulation divide	Highly mobilized activists	Gun-rights/control groups	Background-check support more cross-partisan	Specific regulations can be less polarized than symbolic gun politics
Policing	Local Democratic officials often more moderate than national activists	Republican order emphasis	Activist polarization	Police unions/reform groups	Responsive to crime conditions	City governance constraints produce intra-Democratic variation
Climate	Strong federal party split	Democratic high priority	Environmental vs fossil networks	Utilities, nuclear, labor cross-cut	Issue priority differs from abstract acceptance of climate science	Energy price concerns moderate policy preferences
AI / technology	Still fluid	Distinct regulatory emphases emerging	Tech donors heterogeneous	Startups, Big Tech, labor, national security	Job/privacy concerns cross parties	Not yet fully sorted
Foreign policy	Leadership and congressional factions matter greatly	Democratic internationalism; GOP internal split	Activist left/right restraint	Defense, diaspora and ideological networks	Attention and knowledge lower than elites	Within-party variation often rivals between-party variation

How to read party claims

A sentence beginning "Democrats support X" should normally be rewritten into a testable statement:

"Democratic identifiers in survey Y were more likely than Republican identifiers to support X," or "Democratic members of Congress voted for bill X at rate Y," or "the 2024 Democratic platform endorsed X." Precision about the unit of analysis is substantive, not stylistic.

Appendix B. Survey and Dataset Documentation

Table 26

Source	Field dates / release	Population / sample	Primary use in this monograph	Key caution
Pew NPORS 2026	Jan. 30-June 18, 2026	5,511 U.S. adults	Party identification by gender, race, education, cohort	Adults, not registered or validated voters; subgroup MOEs vary.
Pew Political Typology 2026	Nov. 17-30, 2025; follow-ups through Apr. 2026	10,357 U.S. adults	Nine-cluster value structure	Published 2026 but core clustering fielded in 2025.
Pew Validated Voters 2024	Postelection survey Nov. 12-17, 2024	8,942 citizens surveyed; 7,100 validated voters	Vote choice, turnout, demographic coalitions	Turnout validated; vote choice remains survey response.
Pew Partisan Coalitions 2024	Report Apr. 9, 2024; combines 1994-2023 trends	Registered voters; telephone + ATP methodology	Longitudinal party ID and coalition composition	Mode adjustment needed across telephone/online eras.
Pew Government Role 2024	Apr. 8-14, 2024	8,709 adults; 7,166 registered voters	Government size, health responsibility, Social Security	Candidate-support labels at that stage referenced Biden/Trump.
Pew Immigration 2024	Aug. 5-11, 2024	Registered voters / candidate supporters	Border, deportation and legal immigration attitudes	Supporter groups are not identical to party identifiers.
Pew Scientists 2024	Oct. 21-27, 2024	U.S. adults	Institutional trust	Confidence is not the same as scientific knowledge or policy agreement.
Pew News Sources 2025	Mar. 10-16, 2025	9,482 U.S. adults	News use/trust by party	Audience composition does not classify content ideology.
ANES 2024 Time Series	2024 election; current file May 19, 2026	5,521 respondents	Longitudinal attitudes, party ID, ideology, candidate evaluations	Version corrections require file-date reporting.
CES 2024 Common Content	2024 election	Approx. 60,000 adults	Fine-grained subgroup and state analysis	Large N does not remove question wording or weighting issues.

Measurement glossary

Party identifier: respondent who calls themselves a Democrat or Republican. **Leaner:** nominal independent/other respondent who reports leaning toward a major party. **Validated voter:** respondent matched to a turnout record. **Eligible citizen:** adult citizen legally eligible, whether registered or not. **Likely voter:** modeled campaign-poll category. **Ideology:** self-description or issue-derived scale; neither equals party identification.

Table 27

Appendix C. Evidence Classification and Claim Audit

Claim	Status	Principal evidence	Uncertainty / alternative interpretation
Education is now a major partisan cleavage.	Empirical finding	Pew 1994-2026 trends; validated elections; ANES/CES	Mechanism contested: culture, geography, occupation and institutional trust overlap.
Republicans are becoming a multiracial working-class coalition.	Analytical inference / possible trend	2024 gains among Hispanic, Black and Asian voters; noncollege strength	One election cannot establish durable realignment; 2026 party ID partly moved back Democratic among minorities.
Democrats are becoming the party of professionals.	Partial empirical finding	BA/postgraduate and occupational patterns	Democrats also retain large lower-income and service-worker constituencies.
Republicans support small government.	Misleading generalization	Mass symbolic preferences plus governing actions	More accurate for redistribution/regulation than for border, trade, security or selected cultural policy.
Democrats are socialist.	Mostly false as blanket description	Platforms and enacted policy rely on private ownership and markets	Democratic socialist faction exists but does not define the entire party.
Parties switched sides.	Partly true shorthand	Race/region realignment literature	Different issues realigned on different timelines; no total ideological exchange.
Social media causes polarization.	Contested scholarly interpretation	Observational and experimental literature	Platform experiments show limited attitudinal effects from changing like-minded exposure alone.
America contains two separate societies.	Heuristic / analytical inference	Geographic, educational, religious and media differentiation	Pew typology and cross-pressured groups show substantial internal heterogeneity and overlap.
Education will replace race as the main cleavage.	Forward-looking scenario	Recent diploma divide and minority noncollege shifts	Race remains powerful; durability depends on multiple future cycles.
AI could reorganize the party system.	Forward-looking scenario	Potential labor, capital, energy and national-security cross-pressures	New issues may simply be absorbed into existing partisan identities.

Appendix D. Figure Source Notes and Numbering Register

1. Party affiliation, 2026 - Pew NPORS, Jan. 30-Jun. 18, 2026, N=5,511 adults.
2. Party-development schematic - author synthesis based on Sundquist, Carmines-Stimson, Black-Black and Schickler.
3. Realignment-by-domain schematic - author synthesis based on the historical realignment literature.
4. Competing conceptions overlap - author ideal-type synthesis; heuristic, not a population estimate.
5. Class-recomposition schematic - author synthesis of multidimensional class mechanisms.
6. Class indicators - Pew 2024 partisan-coalition report, registered-voter measures.
7. Education, 2026 - Pew NPORS, four-way education.
8. Education trend, 2020-2026 - Pew NPORS annual party-ID/leaning estimates.
9. Race and ethnicity, 2026 - Pew NPORS; Asian estimate carries language-coverage and subgroup-precision cautions.
10. Coalition diversification - Pew 1996-2023 coalition composition.
11. 2024 presidential vote by race - Pew validated-voter analysis.
12. Religion vote, 2024 - Pew validated-voter analysis.
13. Gender party ID, 2026 - Pew NPORS.
14. Young-adult gender party ID, 2026 - Pew NPORS; small-subgroup MOEs are comparatively large.
15. Birth-decade cohorts, 2026 - Pew NPORS.
16. Education and geography vote, 2024 - Pew validated voters.
17. Government scope/program attitudes - Pew ATP, Apr. 8-14, 2024; denominators differ by panel as labeled.
18. Immigration attitudes - Pew Aug. 5-11, 2024 candidate-supporter survey.
19. News-source use - Pew ATP, Mar. 10-16, 2025, N=9,482 adults.
20. Political typology - Pew ATP, Nov. 17-30, 2025, N=10,357; report published June 10, 2026.
21. Two Americas ideal-type schematic - author synthesis; heuristic rather than literal population partition.
22. Trust in scientists - Pew Oct. 21-27, 2024.
23. Turnout consistency - Pew validated-voter panel, 2020-2024.
24. Future-scenarios schematic - author conditional scenario map; no election probability is assigned.

Uncertainty and comparison rule. Survey figures show point estimates unless otherwise stated. Compact figures generally do not plot error bars; small-subgroup estimates must be interpreted with source-level margins of error and sample-size cautions. Percentages from different populations or differently worded questions are not treated as interchangeable. Tables 1-31 are numbered at their first substantive occurrence; multi-page continuations retain the same table number.

Appendix E. Cross-Pressured Coalition Casebook

Cross-pressure is where future coalition change usually becomes visible first. The profiles below identify groups for whom economic, cultural, religious, racial, geographic or institutional cues point in different partisan directions. They are analytical cases, not predictions about how any group will vote.

Interpretive rule. A cross-pressured group should not be labeled a “swing bloc” merely because one election moved. Durable realignment requires repeated movement in party identification, turnout and down-ballot voting, preferably across several electoral cycles and different candidate environments.

Group	Democratic-pulling mechanisms	Republican-pulling mechanisms	What to measure longitudinally	Major confounders
Noncollege Hispanic workers	Wage policy, social insurance, labor rights, anti-discrimination, legalization pathways.	Border/order concerns, entrepreneurship, religion, family traditionalism, distrust of professional institutions.	Party ID, union status, nativity, national origin, turnout, congressional as well as presidential vote.	Mexican/Cuban/Puerto Rican and other origin differences; region; generation.
Black men without college degrees	Civil-rights history, economic policy, healthcare, voting-rights enforcement.	Gender gap, cultural moderation, entrepreneurship, criminal-justice and institutional attitudes.	Party ID versus candidate vote; turnout stability; age; church attendance; income and occupation.	Very strong continuing Black Democratic identification; small subgroup samples.
Asian American small-business households	Immigration, pluralism, education investment, anti-discrimination.	Taxes, regulation, crime, affirmative-action disputes, entrepreneurship.	National origin, generation, business ownership, education, metro geography.	Pan-ethnic aggregation conceals large Chinese, Indian, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese and other differences.
Working-class Catholics	Labor institutions, social insurance, healthcare, immigration incorporation.	Abortion, religious liberty, family norms, cultural traditionalism.	Race/ethnicity, Mass attendance, union status, region, education.	White and Latino Catholic politics differ substantially.
Union households	Collective bargaining, labor-law enforcement, wage regulation, pensions.	Noncollege cultural sorting, guns, immigration, energy and geographic identity.	Member versus household status, sector, union density, vote and party ID.	Union leadership and rank-and-file members are distinct units of analysis.
Affluent suburban professionals	Social liberalism, institutional trust, climate, reproductive rights, professional networks.	Taxation, regulation, business ownership, property and market preferences.	Postgraduate status, occupation, household wealth, metro location, candidate-specific vote.	Income alone obscures professional versus ownership class.
White college-educated men	Institutionalism, social moderation/liberalism, internationalism.	Taxation, business policy, guns, gender/cultural attitudes.	Occupation, religion, suburban location, wealth and family status.	Gender strongly conditions the diploma divide.
Rural minority voters	Historic Democratic racial coalitions, social programs, civil-rights policy.	Rural culture, gun ownership, religious practice, agricultural/resource economies.	County type, race, church attendance, occupation, turnout, local versus national vote.	Black Belt, tribal areas and Hispanic rural communities have different histories.
Military veterans	Veterans benefits, some institutional/national-service appeals, diverse younger cohorts.	National security, gun culture, masculine occupational networks, conservative geography.	Era of service, rank, education, combat exposure, race and region.	Veterans are not equivalent to active-duty personnel; officer/enlisted patterns differ.
Technology workers and founders	Social liberalism, immigration, science, metropolitan networks.	Deregulation, capital formation, anti-censorship politics, entrepreneurial autonomy.	Founder/employee distinction, firm size, AI exposure, occupation, contribution versus vote.	“Silicon Valley” is not a single class or political actor.
Young men	Economic insecurity, healthcare, climate, some civil-libertarian attitudes.	Recent gender polarization, online counter-establishment culture, dissatisfaction with institutions.	Repeated party-ID series, turnout, race, education, employment and family formation.	Age and period effects can mimic cohort change; 2026 subgroup margins are large.
Small-business owners	Healthcare, infrastructure, local development, some immigration needs.	Taxes, regulation, property rights, cultural localism.	Employer/nonemployer status, sector, employees, metro/rural location, wealth.	Self-employment ranges from gig work to substantial firms.

How cross-pressure produces realignment

SCHOLARLY INTERPRETATION Cross-pressure matters politically when one dimension becomes sufficiently salient to override others. The mechanism can be electoral persuasion, turnout mobilization, elite cue-taking or organizational incorporation. Historically, durable partisan change has often required organizations capable of converting social change into party nominations, policy commitments and repeated voting behavior rather than a one-cycle candidate effect (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Schickler 2016; Bawn et al. 2012).

ANALYTICAL INFERENCE The contemporary diploma divide creates unusually large possibilities for cross-racial political movement because education now correlates with cultural attitudes, professional location and geography across multiple racial groups. But the persistence of racial, religious and organizational ties means an education-centered party system is a plausible trajectory rather than an accomplished fact (Jessee 2026; Zingher 2026).

Appendix F. Policy Evidence Ladder

A claim about “the Democratic position” or “the Republican position” is strongest when multiple levels of evidence point in the same direction. This appendix applies the six-layer protocol demanded throughout the monograph.

Table 29

Policy domain	Official platform / leaders	Executive implementation	Congressional behavior	Activists / organized interests	Ordinary partisan public	Internal tensions / audit rule
Taxation	Democrats emphasize progressivity and credits; Republicans emphasize rate reduction and investment incentives.	Administration-specific tax proposals and Treasury implementation matter.	Use reconciliation and tax roll calls rather than slogans.	Labor, business, anti-tax and progressive groups exert different pressure.	Preferences vary by income and question framing.	Separate general anti-tax identity from support for individual credits and deductions.
Social Security	Both national coalitions publicly defend core benefits.	Budget proposals may differ on administration and financing.	Large changes face bipartisan electoral constraints.	Senior organizations and fiscal groups pull in opposite directions.	Large majorities in both 2024 presidential camps opposed benefit reductions.	Mass consensus is stronger than elite fiscal debate.
Medicaid / SNAP	Democratic leaders favor broader eligibility; Republican leaders favor tighter eligibility/work rules.	Waivers, eligibility enforcement and agency guidance are central.	P.L. 119-21 provides direct governing evidence of contemporary Republican priorities.	Governors, hospitals, anti-poverty groups and fiscal conservatives matter.	Program views depend strongly on beneficiary framing and deservingness cues.	Do not infer all welfare attitudes from abstract “government size” questions.
Healthcare	Democrats defend/expand ACA; Republicans favor more market-oriented alternatives and state flexibility.	Subsidy, enrollment, drug-price and Medicaid implementation matter.	ACA repeal/ expansion votes are stronger evidence than campaign language.	Insurers, hospitals, pharma, labor and single-payer activists differ.	Democrats more supportive of federal responsibility; single payer does not command equivalent bipartisan support.	“Government healthcare” bundles several institutionally different models.
Labor	Democrats more supportive of collective bargaining; Republicans of right-to-work and employer flexibility.	NLRB appointments and rulemaking materially shift enforcement.	PRO Act and labor-law roll calls reveal elite separation.	Union organizations heavily Democratic; business associations generally more Republican.	Workers are more politically divided than union institutions.	Never equate union leadership, union members and “working class.”
Trade / tariffs	Democratic center moved toward managed strategic trade; Trump-era GOP made tariffs central.	Tariff proclamations are direct evidence of contemporary Republican governing behavior.	Trade authority often delegates significant discretion to the executive.	Manufacturers, agriculture, retailers, labor and national-security groups differ.	Public attitudes vary with country, product and perceived jobs effects.	This domain demonstrates major change from Reagan-era Republican orthodoxy.
Immigration	Democrats combine legalization/incorporation with enforcement; Republicans prioritize border restriction/deportation.	Removal priorities, asylum rules and border administration are decisive.	Legislative coalitions often fail because enforcement and legalization are bundled differently.	Business, restrictionist, immigrant-rights and humanitarian organizations compete.	2024 surveys show sharp deportation gaps but bipartisan support for border security and skilled immigration.	Avoid “open borders” and “anti-immigration” caricatures.
Education	Democrats favor public-school institutions; Republicans emphasize choice and parental authority.	Title IX, civil-rights enforcement and grant conditions matter.	Federal role is limited by state/local governance yet nationally polarized.	Teachers unions, school-choice networks, parent groups and universities matter.	Curriculum questions are highly wording-sensitive.	Separate resource policy from cultural-governance conflict.
Crime	Democratic coalition contains reform and public-safety wings; Republicans emphasize order and enforcement.	DOJ priorities and federal grants matter, but policing is heavily local.	Sentencing and criminal-justice legislation has sometimes been bipartisan.	Police unions, prosecutors, civil-rights and reform groups differ.	Crime salience is sensitive to local conditions and perceived disorder.	Do not infer national party positions directly from one city prosecutor.
Guns	Democrats favor more regulation; Republicans center Second Amendment protection.	ATF rules and executive enforcement matter.	Background-check and firearm legislation reveal issue-specific coalitions.	Gun-rights and gun-control organizations are highly mobilized.	Some regulations attract more cross-party support than elite rhetoric suggests.	Separate gun ownership, self-defense values and specific regulatory proposals.
Climate / energy	Democrats emphasize decarbonization; Republicans emphasize production, affordability and regulatory restraint.	EPA rules, leasing, tax-credit implementation and permitting are central.	Major tax/energy statutes reveal coalition priorities.	Fossil-fuel, renewable, utility, labor and environmental groups cross-cut.	Nuclear power and permitting can create cross-party overlap.	Energy policy is not reducible to “fossil versus renewable.”

Table 29 (continued)

Policy domain	Official platform / leaders	Executive implementation	Congressional behavior	Activists / organized interests	Ordinary partisan public	Internal tensions / audit rule
AI / technology	Democratic networks place more weight on safety, rights and regulation; Republican leadership emphasizes innovation, infrastructure and anti-censorship.	Executive orders, procurement rules and national-security AI policy are currently more developed than comprehensive federal legislation.	Congressional positions remain fluid and issue-specific.	Big Tech, startups, labor, civil-liberties and national-security groups conflict.	Jobs, privacy and deepfake concerns cross partisan lines.	One of the least fully sorted major policy domains as of the research cutoff.
Election administration	Democrats stress access; Republicans stress integrity and procedural controls.	Federal executive authority is constrained by state administration.	Voting-rights and election-security bills reveal sharp elite conflict.	Voting-rights and election-integrity groups mobilize differently.	Voter ID can poll differently depending on implementation details.	Empirical security claims must be separated from normative institutional preferences.
Abortion	Democratic leadership favors legal access; Republican coalition favors greater regulatory authority, with internal variation after Dobbs.	Agency and enforcement decisions interact with state law.	Federal legislative positions are more polarized than some state electorates.	Reproductive-rights and pro-life organizations are core policy demanders.	Public opinion contains substantial middle positions on gestational limits and exceptions.	Post-Dobbs federalism increases state-level heterogeneity.
Foreign alliances	Democratic center favors alliance-based internationalism.	Presidential diplomacy can shift commitments quickly.	Ukraine/NATO-related votes expose Republican intraparty divisions.	National-security institutions, restraint groups and diaspora constituencies matter.	Mass opinion responds to threat, cost and elite cues.	Foreign policy increasingly divides parties internally as well as between them.

Evidence-strength rule

EMPIRICAL FINDING Platform language is evidence of official commitments, not proof of implementation. Roll-call votes are stronger evidence of legislative behavior, enacted statutes of governing outcomes, administrative rules of implementation, and representative surveys of mass preference. Each answers a different question. Treating one level as a substitute for the others is a category error.

Appendix G. Historical Coalition Audit

The table operationalizes the book's first research principle: never project contemporary party positions backward. Each period is treated as its own coalition configuration.

Period	Democratic lineage / coalition	Republican / predecessor coalition	Economic axis	Race / section	Federal power	Religion / culture	Foreign-policy context	Type of change
Jeffersonian era	Democratic-Republican agrarian/localist coalition; not the modern Democratic Party.	Federalists favored stronger national financial institutions.	Agrarian republicanism versus Hamiltonian finance/development.	Slavery embedded in sectional order.	Contestation over national fiscal capacity.	Regional and denominational differences.	Britain/France alignment debates.	Pre-modern party genealogy.
Jacksonian era	Mass White-male democracy, farmers, immigrants, southern slaveholding interests.	Whigs: commerce, moral reform, national development.	Bank/finance conflict; limited national economic state versus developmentalism.	Sectional slavery conflict grows.	Jacksonian anti-bank state but strong presidency.	Ethnocultural cleavages important.	Expansionism.	Formation of enduring Democratic organization.
1850s-1860	Democrats split increasingly by section over slavery.	Republicans form from antislavery Whigs, Free Soilers and antislavery Democrats.	Free labor + northern development.	Slavery expansion becomes system-defining.	Federal territorial authority central.	Protestant reform currents significant in GOP.	Continental expansion.	Critical party-system replacement.
Civil War / Reconstruction	Opposition coalition, especially White South.	Union, emancipation, Reconstruction constitutionalism.	National development, tariffs, railroads.	Republicans enforce Reconstruction Amendments; southern Democrats resist.	Republican national-rights power.	Section and race dominate.	Postwar consolidation.	Constitutional transformation.
Gilded Age	Solid South + immigrant machines + agrarian/lower-tariff currents.	Northern industry, tariffs, Union memory.	Tariff/currency/business cleavages.	Jim Crow solidifies in South.	Limited regulatory state by modern standards.	Ethnocultural/religious voting strong.	Rising overseas role late period.	Competitive sectional equilibrium.
Progressive Era	Wilson progressivism plus southern racial conservatism.	Conservative and progressive Republican wings.	Regulation and antitrust cut across parties.	National reform coexists with racial exclusion.	Administrative capacity expands.	Prohibition/reform cleavages cross-party.	WWI/internationalism disputes.	Cross-party ideological movement.
New Deal	Labor, urban ethnics, South, farmers, intellectuals; growing Black support.	Business/market opposition plus regional strongholds.	Welfare state and economic management become central.	Democratic coalition internally split on segregation.	Major federal expansion.	Culture less perfectly sorted than today.	Isolationism/interventionism cross-party until WWII.	Major economic realignment.
1940s-1960s	Northern Democrats increasingly integrate civil rights with liberalism.	GOP contains northern civil-rights and conservative wings.	Broad acceptance of mixed economy with disputes over scope.	Black Democratic consolidation; southern White defection begins.	Federal civil-rights enforcement expands.	Religion not yet fully party-sorted.	Cold War internationalism broad.	Gradual racial/ideological sorting.
Great Society / Nixon	Civil rights, welfare-state expansion, antiwar and labor currents.	Law-and-order, Sunbelt and conservative growth.	Redistribution/regulation gap widens.	Southern realignment accelerates.	Rights enforcement versus conservative federalism.	Culture-war foundations emerge.	Vietnam divides coalitions.	Nationalization of race/culture.
Reagan era	Labor/minorities/liberals with centrist and southern remnants.	Market + religious + national-security fusionism.	Tax cuts/deregulation versus welfare-state defense.	White southern GOP alignment deepens.	Small-government rhetoric; strong defense state.	Religious Right institutionalizes.	Anti-Soviet internationalism.	Conservative coalition consolidation.
Clinton era	New Democrats combine social liberalism with market accommodation.	Gingrich-era conservative congressional coalition.	Trade/globalization consensus with welfare/tax disputes.	Minority Democratic alignment persists.	Administrative state retained; welfare reform.	Social issues increasingly sorted.	Post-Cold War primacy/globalization.	Centrist adaptation within sorting.

Table 30 (continued)

Period	Democratic lineage / coalition	Republican / predecessor coalition	Economic axis	Race / section	Federal power	Religion / culture	Foreign-policy context	Type of change
George W. Bush	Opposition coalition increasingly urban and minority.	Tax cuts + social conservatism + assertive interventionism.	Market conservatism remains strong.	Latino outreach coexists with emerging restrictionist pressures.	Security-state expansion after 9/11.	Same-sex marriage and religion salient.	War on Terror/ neoconservative influence.	Security-driven reconfiguration.
Obama / Tea Party	Young, Black, minority, metro and college-educated coalition grows.	Tea Party anti-state mobilization plus existing conservative coalition.	ACA/regulation versus retrenchment.	Racial attitudes more tightly sorted.	Administrative-state conflict intensifies.	Same-sex marriage and secularization sharpen sorting.	Internationalist center with intervention debates.	Education/ geography sorting accelerates.
Trump first era	Professional/ suburban gains plus multiracial base.	Populist-nationalist turn, noncollege gains.	Tariffs and economic nationalism weaken free-trade orthodoxy.	White working-class GOP strength; minority shifts begin.	Strong executive/ border state alongside deregulatory goals.	Culture and anti-establishment politics central.	America First challenges alliance assumptions.	Intraparty ideological transformation.
Biden era	Alliance of professionals, minorities, labor and progressive/ centrist wings.	Trump influence remains dominant within GOP coalition.	Industrial policy, infrastructure, clean energy, stronger labor rhetoric.	Debate over multiracial working-class erosion.	Administrative capacity used for industrial/ social policy.	Abortion/ gender/ education conflicts intensified.	Ukraine/NATO and China competition central.	Post-neoliberal Democratic adjustment.
Mid-2020s	Coalition debates over professionals versus broader working class.	Market conservatives coexist with MAGA/national conservatives.	Tax reduction + tariffs + industrial nationalism versus regulated/ developmental capitalism.	2024 GOP coalition more diverse; 2026 party ID cautions against declaring permanent realignment.	Conflict over executive control and administrative autonomy.	Education, gender and institutional trust increasingly salient.	China, alliances, Iran/Middle East and sovereignty debates.	Unsettled recomposition, not completed realignment.

Realignment versus sorting diagnostic

A **realignment** changes the social constituencies or durable issue commitments sustaining the parties. **Sorting** moves citizens and elites into parties that more consistently match preexisting attitudes. Candidate effects, turnout shocks and one-election swings may accompany either process but are not sufficient evidence of a new party system. The correct diagnosis therefore requires repeated measurement of party identification, vote choice, turnout, down-ballot behavior, issue attitudes and organizational incorporation.

Appendix H. Replication and Verification Protocol

This edition is designed to be auditable. The protocol below specifies how a later researcher should update or challenge its empirical conclusions after the September 7, 2026 research cutoff.

1. Freeze the research vintage

Record dataset release numbers, survey field dates and retrieval dates. ANES files can be corrected after initial release, as occurred with the May 19, 2026 2024 Time Series rerelease. Reproducible work should never cite only “ANES 2024” without identifying the vintage when a corrected release is material.

2. Preserve the denominator

Record whether each statistic describes U.S. adults, citizens, registered voters, likely voters, validated voters, voters in a candidate-supporter subgroup or party identifiers/leaners. Do not compare a percentage among all adults with a percentage among actual voters as if the denominators were identical.

3. Preserve question wording

Archive wording when framing materially affects inference. “Government should do more,” “government should guarantee health coverage,” and “single government health-insurance program” measure related but different constructs. The same rule applies to immigration, abortion, guns and election administration.

4. Separate status from behavior

Party identification, ideological self-placement, vote choice and turnout should be stored as different variables. A durable coalition shift is strongest when they move together; divergence among them is itself substantively important.

5. Separate levels of the party

For every major policy, maintain separate records for national platform, presidential action, congressional roll calls, state implementation where relevant, activist/interest-group demands and representative mass opinion. This prevents a donor, activist or media position from being generalized to the electorate.

6. Require longitudinal confirmation for realignment

Do not label 2024 minority-voter movement, 2026 party identification, or any future midterm swing a realignment on its own. At minimum, compare multiple election cycles and off-election party-ID series, and examine whether movement persists across candidate changes.

7. Audit subgroup precision

Report sample sizes and uncertainty for small subgroups, especially young men/women, national-origin populations, smaller religious traditions and Asian American subgroups. Suppress or qualify estimates when sampling error makes precise comparisons unreliable.

8. Triangulate institutions

Use official statutes, roll calls, court opinions, agency rules and budget documents for governing behavior; peer-reviewed scholarship for causal interpretation; and high-quality surveys for mass attitudes. Think-tank and journalistic material can identify hypotheses or contemporaneous debates but should not substitute for those evidentiary levels when stronger sources exist.

9. Keep forecasts conditional

Future scenarios should specify a mechanism, indicators that would strengthen it, developments that would weaken it, groups expected to move and institutional consequences. They should not be restated as election predictions.

Table 31

10. Maintain a claim-change log

Claim	Current evidence vintage	Update trigger	What would count as disconfirmation?
Education is a major cross-racial cleavage.	CES through 2024; Pew through 2026; Jesse and Zingher 2026.	2028 ANES/CES and multi-year party-ID series.	Education gaps collapse across races and cease predicting vote/ideology.
Republican minority gains may reflect loosening rather than completed racial realignment.	2024 validated vote plus 2026 party-ID benchmarks.	2026 midterms, 2028 presidential election, party-ID trend.	Either full reversion or durable multicycle GOP incorporation would require revising the “loosening” formulation.
Government-size symbolism overstates program-level disagreement.	Pew 2024 government-role survey.	New program-specific polling and enacted budget changes.	Uniform partisan separation across specific benefits would weaken the claim.
Foreign-policy cleavage increasingly runs within as well as between parties.	Platforms, 2024-26 roll calls, 2025 strategy, faction literature.	Major alliance/war votes or new party platforms.	Stable intraparty convergence around one grand strategy would weaken it.
The two-party system compresses multiple value clusters.	Pew 2026 typology; ANES/CES heterogeneity.	Future typologies and latent-class replications.	Mass attitudes becoming nearly one-dimensional within each party would weaken it.

Publication-use principle: the research cutoff should remain visible even after later editions are produced. A new edition should state exactly which claims were updated and which historical interpretations were unchanged.

XXXI. Major Bibliography and Sources 215 entries

This bibliography contains 215 primary, official, dataset, institutional and scholarly sources selected to support the monograph and provide a graduate-

level research pathway. Items not cited directly in the body are included because they bear directly on the mechanisms analyzed.

Source classes: primary, official and data resources; scholarly literature; institutional research.

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- ANES 2024 Time Series: electionstudies.org/data-center/2024-time-series-study/
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