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Abstract
Has polarization influenced how members of the public identify with ideological labels? In our analysis of patterns of ideological identification since the 1970s, we demonstrate that there has been an increase in the proportion of the electorate willing to locate themselves on the standard seven-point ideological scale as the parties have polarized. Moreover, consistent with existing evidence of partisan-ideological sorting, our results indicate that most of the increase in identifying with a label is associated with an increase in partisans selecting the ideological label that matches their partisanship. Finally, we show that attitudes toward moral traditionalism are increasingly related to ideological identifications. Our evidence indicates that the broader political system influences how members of the public identify with ideological labels.

Keywords
ideology, polarization, moral traditionalism
polarizing themselves (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2008) and that issue attitudes, ideology, and partisanship are now more closely aligned (Bafumi & Shapiro, 2009). Others view the electorate’s response as more modest: for example, while partisans are more likely to support their party, they have remained mostly moderate (Ansolabehere et al., 2006; Fiorina et al., 2011) and much of the public nowadays does not exhibit appreciably greater issue constraint (Baldassarri & Gelman, 2008; Lupton et al., 2015). Besides, a non-trivial portion do not cleanly map on to the left-right dimension (e.g., Carmines et al., 2012b). In spite of these disagreements, a strong consensus has emerged regarding the increased importance and salience of partisanship (e.g., Bafumi & Shapiro, 2009; Bartels, 2000) and the trend of partisan-ideological sorting (Abramowitz, 2010; Levendusky, 2009). Such sorting occurs when an individual’s ideological identification is in line with his or her partisan identification and has important consequences, including on voting behavior (Davis & Mason, 2016).

Although much has been learned about the causes and consequences of partisan-ideological sorting, relatively less recent attention has been paid to the process of whether citizens identify with an ideological label at all. This lack of attention may be due to the extensive evidence that a large portion of the electorate falls short of ideological thinking. Campbell et al. (1960, p. 192) define ideology as a “close-woven, and far-ranging structure of attitudes.” Converse’s (1964, p. 207) characterization of belief systems being “bound together by some form of constraint” speaks to that logic. Of course, these early studies concluded that much of the electorate failed to engage in ideological thinking. Still, while only a fraction of respondents at any given time would be classified as an “ideologue” (Campbell et al., 1960; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008), many non-ideologues are perfectly willing to identify with an ideological label (Levitin & Miller, 1979). And, while the precise influence of one’s ideological identification varies in the electorate (e.g., Holm & Robinson, 1978; Jacoby, 1991; Knight, 1985), it appears to be important regardless of one’s penchant for engaging in abstract thinking about politics.

Self-identification’s influence arises in part because it can act as a “predisposition” (e.g., Sears et al., 1980; Sears & Funk, 1999) and that ideological identifications have largely symbolic, nonissue-oriented meaning to the mass public (Conover & Feldman, 1981, p. 641). From this perspective, one’s ideological identification could be thought of as a social identity, which can be defined as “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his/her knowledge of his/her membership in a social group (groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1978, p. 63). In other words, resulting political behavior can be seen as expressive—motivated by the degree to which it allows personal expression—rather than as purely instrumental (Hamlin & Jennings, 2011). Consistent with this view is evidence that one’s ideological identification is relatively stable over time (Kinder & Kalmoe, 2017, p. 75). Further, one’s ideological identification has its own independent effect on attitudes and behavior: for example, “policy judgments are shaped by both symbolic and principled considerations” (Popp & Rudolph, 2011, p. 818); and, identification can influence how one labels specific policies (Claassen et al., 2015), along with ratings of candidates (Malka & Lelkes, 2010) and one’s vote choice (Devine, 2015). Moreover, Mason (2018, p. 885) demonstrates that ideological identification “can drive affective ideological polarization even when individuals are naïve about policy.” In summary, it is fair to say that one’s ideological identity has important influence on attitudes and behavior even when it does not represent a comprehensive belief system.

An important way in which ideological identification differs from that of partisanship is that a large proportion of respondents decline to answer the question—Kinder and Kalmoe (2017, p. 58) note that 27.5% of respondents in a pooled sample from 1972 to 2012 do not place themselves on the ideological scale. However, looking at a pooled sample may miss important dynamics in how the electorate has identified with ideological labels over the last several decades (e.g., Carmines et al., 2012a; McCarty et al., 2006; Norrander & Wilcox, 2008; Theiss-Morse et al., 2018, pp. 191–193; Thornton, 2013). It is precisely such a phenomenon that we seek to examine.

Empirical Expectations

The argument presented here builds off of previous evidence indicating that as the parties sort and polarize, the signals sent to the electorate become clearer (Hetherington, 2001), a trend that has continued (Smidt, 2017). Building upon such findings, we argue that if there is some cognitive “cost” that exists to identify with an ideological label, a portion of that cost can be “subsidized” by polarized parties and non-elected political actors, such as the media, interest groups, and public intellectuals. When members of the public are more frequently exposed to the terms “liberal” and “conservative,” it makes ideological labels more salient and relevant to members of the electorate. Therefore, the first hypothesis is: increased elite polarization will lead members of the public to be more willing to locate themselves on the standard seven-point ideology scale.

It should not, however, merely be the case that partisans are willing to identify with a label. Rather, when elected officials of one party—along with and non-elected actors associated with that party—are consistent in their use of symbolic rhetoric, it becomes easier for individuals to both recognize this difference and to align themselves with one of the two parties and its stated ideological label. Consequently, we should see individuals identifying with the label that is consistent with their partisanship. That is, we should see that a decline in “don’t knows” is associated with an increase in
partisans selecting either “conservative” or “liberal” to match their partisan identity. Thus, the second hypothesis is: as polarization has increased, partisans will select the ideological label consistent with their partisan identification relative to picking no label. It is worth noting that while the process of partisan-ideological sorting has been documented previously, it has not been done so against the backdrop of refusing to answer the question of ideological self-placement.

The first two hypotheses could be consistent with an electorate that is merely mirroring the labels they see presented to them in the media and by the parties. If this were the case, it would be reasonable to conclude that the labels are purely symbolic. We, however, argue that certain beliefs should be more likely to lead to a particular identification in recent years—namely, beliefs about moral traditionalism. The logic is as follows: As the parties have polarized, elite politics has become increasingly unidimensional and issues that were once tangential to the primary political debates are now increasingly important political cleavages. Indeed, Hare and Poole (2014, p. 418) note that the meaning of the primary ideological dimension at the elite level “has changed and it now encompasses a wider range of issues.” Most relevant to the argument presented here is that among members of Congress, social issues have been increasingly related to economic issues as the parties polarize, possibly a result of “conflict extension” (Layman & Carsey, 2002). Moreover, there is some recent evidence that beliefs about life-style issues are increasingly salient among members of the public: Lewis-Beck et al. (2008, p. 236) suggest their analysis of ideology and values “may indicate that substantive scope of mass attitudes is broader in the twenty-first century than it was during the 1950s,” a result substantiated using scaling techniques to examine the issue space of the public (Hare et al., 2018) and an examination of the relationship among values, partisanship, and ideology (Lupton et al., 2020). Likewise, Fiorina et al. (2011, pp. 129–134) argue that religious cleavages are increasingly relevant for the public, which is consistent with evidence that religious traditionalism is increasingly important (Layman & Carmines, 1997) and that moral traditionalism is more strongly related to ratings of candidate traits (Hetherington et al., 2016). In short, there is reason to expect that beliefs about moral traditionalism will have an increased importance in how individuals identify with an ideological label. Therefore, the third hypothesis is: as the parties have polarized, one’s beliefs about the importance of moral traditionalism will be increasingly related to one’s ideological identification.

Data and Methods

To examine our hypotheses, we make use of the cumulative file from the American National Election Studies (ANES). Because the ideology question was initially introduced in 1972, we include all available presidential and midterm elections from 1972 to 2016 with the exceptions of 1974 and 2002. This results in the inclusion of 18 surveys in the analyses. In each year, respondents are asked some variation of, “We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a 7-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative.” This question is used to construct the dependent variables.

In order to test the first hypothesis—that increased polarization is associated with an increase in individuals identifying with an ideological label—we code all individuals who answer the question as one and all others as zero. The data structure is tiered with individuals clustered within 18 election-years and the hypothesis indicates that a year-level variable, polarization, influences an individual’s likelihood of identifying. We thus estimate a multilevel logistic regression with individuals nested by survey-year. With 18 elections, maximum likelihood provides unbiased coefficient estimates (Stegmueller, 2013). Polarization is measured using DW-NOMINATE (Lewis et al., 2019). Specifically, we calculate the distance between the median Republican and Democrat in both the Senate and House and take the average of these two quantities. Drawing on the literature explaining choices in ideological identification, we include the following as control variables: education measured using a six-point scale ranging from less than high school to more than college; the age of the respondent measured in years; gender with females coded as one; race, with dummy variables for black, Latina/o, and other with white as the excluded reference category; political knowledge, measured using knowledge of which party controls the House of Representatives; and a dummy variable indicating if the survey was conducted in an off-year election.

We test the robustness of this finding in several ways. First, Kinder and Kalmoe (2017, pp. 70–71) argue that there is little to distinguish those who fail to answer the self-identification question and those who identify as moderate. Accordingly, we examine the robustness of our finding by recoding those who identify as moderate as zero. We also create a three-category nominal variable where we code individuals as: not answering the question, as identifying as moderate, and as identifying as liberal or conservative. Finally, we estimate a model with a year-counter in place of polarization given the strong relationship between polarization and time since the 1970s as well as with year fixed-effects.

The second hypothesis is that the increase in observed rates of response to the ideology question should primarily be a result in partisans selecting into the “correct” ideological label. In this case, we restrict the sample to partisans, including leaners. Here the dependent variable is a four-category nominal variable, where the unordered categories are sorted, unsorted, no response, and moderate—we thus estimate a multilevel regression with a multinomial link function. We include identical controls as before with the addition of partisan intensity. As with hypothesis one, we estimate a model with a year counter instead of polarization as a robustness check and with year fixed-effects.
In order to test the third hypothesis—that the influence of social issues will be increasingly important—we estimate a Heckman model where the selection stage is if the respondent offers a self-placement and the outcome stage is one’s self-placement on the seven-point ideology scale. The key empirical expectation involves the outcome stage where it is expected that polarization in later years will lead to an increase in the marginal effect of attitudes about moral traditionalism on ideological identification. The questions needed to construct a moral traditionalism scale were introduced in 1986 so our analysis is restricted to the years 1986 to 2016 (12 surveys). While it would be ideal if this question were available for the entire time period under consideration, the available years do provide meaningful variation for polarization. The moral traditionalism scale consists of four items and forms a somewhat reliable scale: $\alpha = .632$ for the pooled sample. The moral traditionalism scale is then interacted with the measure of polarization to test the third hypothesis.

As control variables in the outcome stage, we include education, age, race, and gender, measured identically as previously described. As with the first analysis, this includes both partisans and pure independents. In the selection stage, we include identical control variables used to test the first hypothesis: education, age, gender, knowledge, and if the survey is conducted in an off-year. While not always necessary to identify a selection model (Vella, 1998), we include a subsection of variables in only the outcome or selection stage. Off-year and knowledge are included in only the selection stage while the measure of moral values is only included in the outcome stage. For this model, we cluster standard errors by election.

We examine the robustness of this model in several ways. We allow the impact of moral traditionalism to vary by year as opposed to an interaction term with polarization (we estimate a specification where it is assumed the impact changes linearly with time and a specification that relaxes such an assumption). Given the smaller number of clusters due to question availability, we estimate the primary model with a Bayesian specification. Finally, we also estimate just the outcome stage—those who place themselves on the seven-point scale—in a multilevel framework, including both maximum likelihood and Bayesian models.

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Results

To examine the first hypothesis—elite polarization leads to an increasing share of respondents who identify with a label—we begin with examining aggregate trends in how individuals respond to the ideology question. Figure 1 presents the percentage of those who do not answer the question (left-hand panel), who identify as a moderate (middle panel), and who identify as liberal or conservative (right-hand panel) with a loess curve (the descriptive data is calculated with weights provided by the ANES). Since the early 1980s there has been an increase in those who identify with an ideological label which has been accompanied with a similar decrease in the percentage of those who do not locate themselves on the seven-point scale. The percentage of those who identify as moderate shows no systematic change during this period.

Table 1. The Relationship Between Polarization and Choosing an Ideological Label.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polarization</td>
<td>0.888</td>
<td>0.439</td>
<td>.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.474</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>0.001</td>
<td>.326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
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<td>0.031</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
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<td>0.041</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latina/o</td>
<td>-0.318</td>
<td>0.052</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-0.356</td>
<td>0.089</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-0.339</td>
<td>0.030</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-year</td>
<td>0.103</td>
<td>0.090</td>
<td>.250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.374</td>
<td>0.322</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>30,872</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log-likelihood</td>
<td>-14,881.915</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We next examine the relationship between polarization and the choice to identify with a label while controlling for individual and election year factors. The results from a multilevel logistic regression are presented in Table 1, where entries represent coefficient estimates, standard errors and,
p values. We find support for the first hypothesis. The coefficient on polarization is 0.888 with a standard error of 0.439, indicating statistical significance ($p = 0.043$).

In terms of predicted probabilities, the model indicates that moving from 1970s levels of polarization to those observed in 2016 increases the probability of identifying with an ideological label by about 0.06 indicating that a fair portion of the increase observed in Figure 1 can be attributed to elite polarization when controlling for other sources. Our individual level analysis supports the conclusions drawn from examining aggregate patterns of identification.11

Our second hypothesis is that polarization will lead to an increase in identifying with the “correct” label among partisan identifiers. We again begin by appraising trends over time. Figure 2 displays the aggregate percentage of partisans who do not answer the ideology self-identification question, who identify as moderate; who are unsorted; and, who are sorted.

![Figure 2](image_url)

Figure 2. The percentage of partisan identifiers (including leaners) who have no ideological identification, who identify as moderate; who are unsorted; and, who are sorted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Sorted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polarization</td>
<td>0.657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>0.539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>-0.664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latina/o</td>
<td>-0.238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-0.256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-0.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-year</td>
<td>0.225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.647</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The Relationship Between Polarization and Sorting.

- **Polarization** coefficient on polarization is 0.888 with a standard error of 0.439, indicating statistical significance ($p = 0.043$).

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We next turn to examining the influence of polarization controlling for other factors. Table 2 presents the results from such a model. The dependent variable is a four-category nominal variable: sorted, unsorted, moderate, and no identification. The base category is “no identification.” While the coefficient for polarization is significant for the category of “sorted,” offering support for the second hypothesis, the results of this model are more easily interpretable in terms of predicted probabilities. These quantities are presented in Figure 3 with 95% confidence intervals. The results are again consistent with aggregate patterns: polarization is associated with a decline in the probabilities of partisans choosing not to identify with a label and who are unsorted and an increase in the probability of being sorted. There does not seem to be a substantial relationship between polarization and identifying as a moderate.12

Our third hypothesis is that the relationship between attitudes about moral traditionalism and the choice of ideological label has increased with polarization. The results from a Heckman model with standard errors clustered by year are presented in Table 3—the outcome stage is one’s self-placement on the seven-point ideology scale and the selection

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stage is if the respondent offers a self-placement. Given the coding of ideological self-identification and moral traditionalism, our hypothesis suggests that the conditional effect will be increasingly negative. The conditional effect is plotted graphically in Figure 4 with 95% confidence intervals and provides support for the hypothesis.13

As the parties have polarized, issues and values that were once relatively peripheral to the primary cleavages have been absorbed by the primary dimension of political conflict as the parties have polarized at the elite level. As a result, these issues are more directly related to how citizens might evaluate the parties. In other words, the public’s relationship with, and likely understanding of, ideological symbols is a function of the broader political system. In that sense, the result presented in this section speaks to the nature of ideological identification: even if the terms “liberal” and “conservative” do not represent far ranging belief systems for many the public, they nevertheless are not mere symbols. To be clear, we do not interpret this evidence that ideological self-identification represents a belief system for most in the electorate. Our results could also be viewed as consistent with Kinder and Kalmoe’s (2017, p. 124) conclusion that “ideological identification seems more a reflection of political decisions than a cause.”

**Conclusion**

Our contribution to the continuing debate around the impact of polarization consists of examining patterns and correlates of ideological identification over the last 40 years. We particularly focus on the decline of respondents who fail to identify with a label. While much has been made of the public’s “ideological innocence” (Converse, 1964), recent research has refocused on conceptualizing ideology as a symbolic construct (e.g., Ellis & Stimson, 2012) or a social identity (Devine, 2015; Malka & Lelkes, 2010; Mason, 2018), which...
is consistent with earlier theorizing about self-identifications (Conover & Feldman, 1981; Levitin & Miller, 1979). We argue that clearer signals from the parties leads to greater rates of identification in the public. Both aggregate and individual level analyses offered support for this hypothesis. Moreover, increases in partisan-ideological sorting have coincided with a greater share of the electorate choosing to locate themselves on the ideological continuum over time.

Our findings on moral traditionalism suggest one mechanism which bridges issue-based and identity-based ideological identification. With the example of moral traditionalism, we indicate that one’s stance on cultural issues can be a middle-ground variable strongly related to how one chooses to identify. Indeed, contrarily to issue-positions, values act as a “generalized standard that can be used in a wide-ranging set of political domains” (Alvarez & Brehm, 2002, p. 18) and are thus more likely to be available to a wider swath of the electorate. The timing of these changes as occurring in the late 1980s also squares with the hypothesis of a generational change in political outlook among the public from materialist to post-materialist values (Inglehart, 2008; Inglehart & Norris, 2016). Changes at the elite level bear out the hypothesis of a stronger preeminence of values. Indeed, during that era, both parties increased their bid not only for issue (Petrocik et al., 2003) but for value ownership as well. Reagan’s emphasis on moral traditionalism for instance, was on full display when he diagnosed that America’s major predicament was “the issue of simple morality” (Reagan in Scarborough, 2013, pp. 70–71). Our analysis offers suggestive evidence that changes beginning in the Reagan era have led voters to add moral values to their heuristic toolkits.

Taken together, our results suggest that the public’s relationship with ideological labels has changed over the last two decades. These findings are consistent with evidence about the role of political symbols. More recently, the application of social identity theory to partisanship and ideology shed light on more emotional responses towards the in- and out-groups, especially among sorted citizens (Mason, 2016). These forms of political identities are not as demanding as the older constructs of ideological constraint in terms of knowledge, or interest in issues. Their underlying mechanisms involve the tribal concepts of allegiance, winning, and rivalry (Mason, 2013; Miller & Conover, 2015). Nonetheless, they are not necessarily weaker than more constrained forms as suggested in a myriad of recent studies (e.g., Amira, 2019; Mason, 2018).

To conclude, our study suggests that the public is better able to navigate the once abstruse ideological classification. Believing that the public will mirror the constraint and extremity of those in government is empirically unrealistic even in an era of public polarization. Nonetheless, the increasing sorting between partisanship, ideology, and possibly values points to a development that studies on ideological and affective polarization might miss on their own. More respondents report ideological preferences since the 1990s and they align partisanship, ideology, and moral traditionalism in doing so. Therefore, even though the disconnect between traditional and identity-based ideology makes the public look like a mob of “ideologues without issues,” (Mason, 2018) values indicate that ideology is not devoid of content altogether. Further attention to the role of values is warranted in order to situate the electorate between ideological innocence and ideological constraint in an era of affectively charged politics. Going beyond moral traditionalism would be a first step to test the generalizability of these findings, for instance with egalitarianism. Yet, the endeavor is worth pursuing. Indeed, “there is a lot at stake if people connect their partisan affiliations and issue preferences to their basic beliefs about what is good and bad in the world” (Jacoby, 2014, p. 769) and this is even more true if these connections include ideological self-identification as well. We conclude by noting that a weakness of our study—and examinations of polarization more generally—is that time and polarization are so highly correlated. That is, we cannot say with certainty that it is polarization that is leading to the changes we observe. It may be some other change in the system—or some non-political change in society—that has led to an increase in the proportion of the public who identifies with an ideological label. We therefore view our results as suggestive of the influence that polarization has on ideological self-identifications. Future work might leverage experimental designs to alter the salience of ideological salience to more precisely examine this relationship.

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Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Notes

1. A study using data from 2016 indicates that “about 1/7 of cross-sectional variation reflects a common ideological dimension of variation, 3/7 is real but idiosyncratic variation in individuals’ views, and 3/7 is response instability” (Lauderdale et al., 2018, p. 711).
2. Some of the disagreement is very likely a result of the inherent difficulty in measuring mass polarization (Hetherington, 2009). For example, Hare et al. (2015) conclude that failing to account respondents’ different interpretations of issue scales understates levels of polarization in the electorate.
3. We exclude 1974 because our measure of political knowledge was not administered. The 2002 Time Series survey is excluded because of its different mode: it was conducted entirely by phone and therefore may not be directly comparable to other years. Such a concern is borne out in the data as we see a much higher rate of response to the ideology question in 2002 than is seen in 1998, 2000, or 2004. 22.3% of respondents failed to place themselves on the scale in 2002 compared to an average of 18.5% in 1998, 2000, and 2004, a difference that is statistically significant ($p < .01$).
4. The off-year ANES Time Series Study has not been administered since 2002.
5. In 1972 and 1974, the question wording is slightly different: “We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here I’m going to show you a 7-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative.” As noted, we exclude 1974 because of questions availability. Including 1972 does alter the substantive conclusions reported later in the paper. We present our main results for the years 1976–2016 in the supplementary material (Appendix A).
6. There is debate about what measures of polarization using NOMINATE scores are specifically capturing. While part of it is undoubtedly ideological disagreement, Lee (2016) notes that “polarization is not the same thing as party conflict, even if the two are empirically related.” In other words, the measure is, at least partially, a measure of party discipline in addition to ideological polarization.
7. The four items are: (1) “This country would have fewer problems if there were more emphasis on family ties.” (2) “The newer lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of our society.” (3) “The world is always changing and we should adjust our view of moral behavior to those changes.” (4) “We should be more tolerant of people who choose to live according to their own moral standards, even if they are very different from our own.”
8. A bivariate analysis suggests these are reasonable choices for the exclusion restriction: knowledge shares a very low correlation with ideological self-placement, $r = .01$; the difference in ideological self-placement between off-year and presidential elections is 0.054 or less than 1% of the scale; and, the biserial correlation between moral traditionalism and answering the self-placement question is 0.037.
9. While our focus is on the entire electorate, it may be the case that certain subgroups might respond differently to increasing polarization. While extensively examining this possibility is beyond the scope of this paper, there is increasing evidence that the reaction by white Southerners to polarization is unique (e.g., Hill & Tausanovitch, 2018; Lupton & McKee, 2020; Lupton & Thornton, 2019). We provide descriptive evidence of white Southerners as well as our main models while controlling for white Southerners in the supplementary material (Appendix B).
10. Fleishman (1986), examining data from 1972–1982, noted that the public was not more willing to identify with an ideological label in 1980, even though the early 1980s were more ideologically charged. Our evidence indicates there may be a lag between the initial period of polarization and the public’s response.
11. The substantive conclusions from our robustness tests (presented in Supplemental Appendix C) are identical to those presented here.
12. Our robustness check (presented in Supplemental Appendix C) results in identical conclusions.
13. Our robustness checks result in very similar substantive conclusions (full results are presented in Supplemental Appendix E). Two results are worth briefly discussing: first, in the model where the conditional effect can vary non-linearly by year we observe a consistent (although nonmonotonic) trend where the relationship between moral values and ideology strengthens over time; second, in the multilevel models, the coefficient estimates are quite similar to those in the outcome stage of the selection models indicating that the truncation of the sample does not have a substantial influence on the estimates.

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