Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics, Still?

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Worldview Evolution

- Worldview Evolution – When new issues arrive on the scene that reinforce an issue cleavage, producing an even deeper divide.
  - Race and Ethnicity – 1960s
  - Law and Order – 1960s and 1970s
  - Feminism – 1970s and 1980s
  - Gay Rights – 1990s and 2000s
  - War on Terrorism – 2000s

PREFERENCES ON ALL THESE ISSUES ARE ORGANIZED BY THE SAME WORLDVIEW – AUTHORITARIANISM
This has Produced a Different Politics

• Republicans and Democrats choose to live in different types of places
• They prefer different foods
• They watch different sports
• They have different physiological responses to threats, in particular
• We suspect this would have been less true of Rs and Ds 30, 40, or 50 years ago.
Partisans’ Feelings about Their Party and the Other Party
Partisan Differences in Trust in Government by Presidential Administration

- **Johnson**
- **Nixon**
- **Ford**
- **Carter**
- **Reagan**
- **Bush I**
- **Clinton**
- **Bush II**
- **Obama**

**Percent Trusting Government**

- **Republicans**
- **Democrats**

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**Legend**

- Red: Republicans
- Blue: Democrats
Political Trust by Partisanship, 2002-13
Is the Worldview Divide Still There?

• Issues that activate it are tough to resolve
  – Security from foreign threats
  – Immigration
  – Race
  
  – Thinking about old issues in new ways
  – Climate Change
  – Health Care Reform
Measuring Authoritarianism

Although there are a number of qualities that people feel that children should have, every person thinks that some are more important than others. I am going to read you pairs of desirable qualities. Please tell me which one you think is more important for a child to have.

Independence or Respect for Elders

___ Independence
___ Respect for Elders

Obedience or Self-Reliance

___ Obedience
___ Self-Reliance

Curiosity or Good Manners

___ Curiosity
___ Good Manners

Being Considerate or Well-Behaved

___ Being Considerate
___ Being Well-Behaved
Figure 1
Percent Republican Vote by Authoritarianism, 2010
Figure 2
Percent Republican Vote by Authoritarianism, 2012

Number of Authoritarian Responses

Percent

- % Republican Senate Vote
- % Republican Pres Vote
- % Republican House Vote
Figure 3
Partisanship by Authoritarianism, 1992-2012
Figure 4
Figure 5
Support for Various Policies Considered By Congress, By Authoritarianism, 2010

Graph showing the percentage of support for various policies considered by Congress, as a function of the number of authoritarian responses. The policies include DADT Repeal, Obamacare, stem cells, immigration reform, and Cap and Trade. Each line represents a different policy, with a downward trend as the number of authoritarian responses increases.
Figure 6

Number of Authoritarian Responses

Percent

2010
2012